



# COUNCIL IS OWED £2.5M IN TAX

Report by Heather Large

**DUDLEY Council is owed £2.5 million in unpaid council tax from last year, new figures reveal.**

Thousands of council tax accounts were not paid in full by the end of the 2014/15 financial year.

Council chiefs say they are committed to recovering outstanding debts.

Despite the outstanding payments, bosses say the authority has an 'excellent track record' for clawing back money owed.

Councillor Judy Foster, the council's deputy leader, said: "Thankfully, the vast majority of people in Dudley borough pay their council tax on time."

"Where people are struggling to pay we have a number of ways we can offer help and support."

"We have an excellent track record when it comes to the collection of council tax and any outstanding money, which makes us one of the top performing local authorities nationally."

"There are fewer than 12,000 accounts owing council tax for last year in the Dudley borough, which amounts to £2.5m owed for 2014/15. We are continuing to recover outstanding debts."

Anyone who misses a payment instalment is sent a reminder letter. They are given seven days to bring their account up to date by paying the overdue instalment.

## Summons

If payment is not made, a summons is requested from the magistrates' court. No more than three reminders are issued in a financial year.

Across the border in Sandwell borough, a total of 19,628 council tax accounts were not paid in full by the end of the 2014/15 financial year. This has left the council needing to chase £2.2m.

Figures released by Dudley Council earlier this year showed around £1.5m in council housing rent was owed by tenants across the borough — up by 29 per cent on 2012/13. Sixty council tenants were evicted between April 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014 after falling behind on payments.

The council needs to make savings of £22.9m in 2015/16, moving up to £25.3m by 2016/17 and £27.4m by 2017/18. But the council has warned it faces a deficit of approaching £30m by 2017/18 if additional savings are not found.

More than 130 jobs will be axed by Dudley Council in a bid to cut costs.

The council is looking to make 134 voluntary and two compulsory redundancies in 2015/16. Council leaders said they had worked to keep compulsory redundancies to a minimum.

It follows the loss of more than 700 posts during the previous four years.

Cost-cutting proposals include plans to turn off some street lights after midnight, saving £100,000 by 2018.

## CRAFTY CARVERS LOOKING FOR NEW RECRUITS



John Barley, front, shows an example of craftwork with members of the woodcraft group at Leasowes High School in Halesowen

FROM chess sets to ornaments and children's toys — a Black Country craft group has been making a wonderful array of wooden items for more than 20 years.

Based at Leasowes High School, the Leasowes Woodcraft Group carve, turn and polish timber in what for many of its members is a therapeutic hobby in retirement.

The group recently put on an exhibition of its wooden creations and asked GCSE pupils to display their work before inviting teachers at the Halesowen school to inspect their handiwork.

There are currently eight members who meet each Friday but course leader Jim Ault, aged 79, is hoping to recruit more to ensure the group survives and thrives.

He said: "What our members do while they are here is really down to themselves and their own capabilities."

## Expertise

"They are free to please themselves and create whatever they are interested in, while I act as a supervisor."

"One of the guys has a particular interest in

gardening so they do a lot for that," he added.

"A couple of the others have expertise in wood carving, so that is their focus."

Group member Derek Pearson, aged 86, said: "It took me about 12 months to make the chess set, but it is just a hobby of course."

"It is great we have something like this to pass the time and something to concentrate on in retirement."

Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Leasowes High School by calling (01384) 816285 for further details.

## STABBING

### Man arrested over attempted murder

A MAN is being questioned on suspicion of attempted murder after another man was stabbed in the head in Dudley town centre.

The knifing took place in the early hours of Friday, shortly after midnight, near the derelict Gipsies Tent Inn in Stafford Street. A 34-year-old man was arrested more than nine miles away in Hockley, Birmingham, less than an hour later.

The 36-year-old victim suffered wounds to his head and shoulder and was taken to hospital with injuries that were serious but not life threatening. Contact police on 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## ROADS

### Bus lanes axed to cut congestion

TWO bus lanes in Halesowen have been permanently axed in a bid to cut congestion in the town centre.

Proposals were unveiled in March to scrap the lanes in Bromsgrove Road and westbound on Queensway, which have now been brought in. It followed a 12-month trial which Dudley Council said had shown no benefits from having the lanes exclusively for buses.

However, the Queensway eastbound lane will remain in place for buses as drivers said it cut journey times.

## SPEEDWAY

### Supporters trust to boost stadium bid

CRADLEY Heathens speedway club's plans to create a purpose-built stadium is being boosted by plans to start a new supporters trust.

Supporters have revealed plans to establish the trust at a meeting tonight at Cradley Heath Liberal Club.

Officials say the aims of the trust include raising cash towards the project to find land for a new track. The Heathens have been riding at Birmingham's Perry Barr Stadium this season.

The open meeting takes place at the club in Upper High Street, Cradley Heath, starting at 7.45pm.

## INSIDE

### COACH ERNIE IS A KNOCKOUT



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# MP backs Aldi plan for derelict pub



Landmark — The King Arthur

AN MP is supporting plans for a supermarket on the site of a landmark Dudley pub – and wants the jobs to go to Dudley people.

Aldi has lodged proposals to demolish The King Arthur on Birmingham New Road, to make way for the store.

The supermarket says its plans for a 1,000 sq ft shop will create 40 jobs and have a 94-space car park.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said as The King Arthur had been closed for three years, he did not believe it would be profitable as a pub again.

He is supporting the plans for a super-

market because it will create new jobs.

The MP is asking supermarket bosses to offer local people job interviews and to find a way of marking The King Arthur's heritage in the new building.

He said: "I used to go to The King Arthur a lot. My parents liked the carvery on Sundays, so I was sorry to see it close in 2012."

"It's been a real shame to see it empty since."

"I don't think successful, profitable and popular pubs should be turned into supermarkets against the wishes of local people and I worked hard to sup-

port residents campaigning to prevent the Seven Stars in Sedgley being turned into a shop, but The King Arthur hasn't been a pub since 2012. It is empty and derelict."

"Aldi's plans will provide 40 jobs in an area of high unemployment. Local people who live near the site have told me they support the plans, particularly those very close by who have to put up with the problems the site has caused."

West Midlands MEP and Sedgley councillor Bill Etheridge has handed in a petition to Dudley Council signed by 105 opposing the supermarket plan.

# Apartments will not share killer's name

**A RETIREMENT** home complex has been renamed after developers realised the original proposal shared its name with a murderer who struck in the village.

McCarthy & Stone's Hagley development, which will be completed this year, had been advertised as Miller Court after Sanderson Miller who designed nearby Hagley Hall.

But it sparked memories of Victor Miller who in 1988 kidnapped and murdered local paper-boy Stuart Gough, aged 14.

The development of 44 apartments has been renamed Sanderson Court in memory of the architect.

It is 27 years since Stuart was kidnapped on his paper round and killed by warehouseman Miller. Stuart had been a student at Haybridge High School and was snatched by Miller, of Penn Fields, on January 17, 1988. Stuart's body was found 50 miles from his home in a wood near Ledbury, Herefordshire, two weeks later.

## Discovery

The killer led police to the body. He admitted murder and was sentenced to life.

Gene Shaw, who has lived in Hagley for 30 years, said receiving the advert for Miller Court had brought back bad memories. She said: "It was horrible what that horrible man did."

Mrs Shaw's husband Gordon had been the chairman of the local community association while Stuart's father Geoff had been the president. Geoff Gough died in 2013 aged 82. He threw himself into community work in gratitude for the support of villagers and in 2005 was given an MBE.

Mrs Shaw, 70, said she was delighted the name had been changed.

Stuart's mother Jean Gough, aged 71, still lives in the village. She was not aware of the development but was pleased they had decided to rename it. "I am happy they have changed the name and I would like to thank whoever it was that got in touch with the developers," she said.

Gill Sabin, sales and marketing director for McCarthy & Stone, said: "We are pleased to unveil our new name, which has now been confirmed by Bromsgrove District Council and still reflects the rich culture and history of the the local area."

## Bands are ready to rock village



Amie Moore and Charlotte Webb get ready for the Romstock festival with Mark Moran and Ian Allerton

**MUSICAL** acts have signed up for a mini festival in a village near Halesowen.

Eight bands will perform at the Romstock concert in Romsley on Saturday. It will be the fourth successive year that the concert has been held in the village and will be held on the playing fields in St Kenelm's Road.

Romstock band co-ordinator Mark Moran, whose Oasis tribute band Okasis will be one of the bands performing during the con-

cert, said: "Every year it is getting bigger and better."

"It started with the Diamond Jubilee when someone suggested we have a band or two."

"This year there will be eight. There is a tremendous variety of bands, there is something for everyone."

The line-up includes rock covers group The Starving Dogs, acoustic female duo Interior Castle and popular chart covers band Got the T-Shirt.

Former Birmingham Poet Laureate Spoz will also be comper on the day.

Aside from the live music, there will be a children's play area, bouncy castle and skate park.

The bands have agreed to play for free and money raised from the event will be used to support youth community projects in the Romsley area.

Tickets cost £5 can be bought on the gate or in advance from the Spar store in Romsley.

# New naming ceremonies alternative to religion

A REGISTER office has started staging naming ceremonies for newborns.

The events at the Dudley office are also becoming popular as a way of embracing adopted children or stepchildren into families.

Councillor Judy Foster, cabinet member for corporate and customer services, said: "The ceremonies are for parents who want to celebrate and welcome their child into the world, but want an alternative to a religious event."

"They can choose music, words to be read out – the event can be tailored to whatever people want."

"It's a real family-friendly celebration where everyone can take an active part."

## Grandparents

During the ceremony, parents, grandparents and other relatives and friends can make promises to the child.

Parents can share why they chose a particular name for their child and gifts can be presented.

Councillor Foster added: "These ceremonies are a chance for parents, grandparents and friends to contribute to welcoming the little one into the world, all in the beautiful setting of Priory Hall."

"They are also a way for people who have adopted a child to officially welcome them into their family. Or for people who have re-married to welcome stepchildren."

Although the ceremony has no legal effect, a certificate is issued as a keepsake and record of the event.

# Raiders make off with pet supplies

**THOUSANDS** of pounds worth of pet supplies have been stolen from a shop in Netherton.

Among the goods taken from Ted's Pet Supplies in Halesowen Road were leads, collars, shampoo, treatments and toys.

Clare Worton, who runs the shop, said: "We are devastated. We are a small family firm which struggles at the best of times but this has really demoralised us."

Clare's husband Mark discovered the break-in when he went to open the shop up on May 25 and found that the premises had been ransacked.

Anyone with information about the burglary should get in touch with officers at West Midlands Police on 101.

# Grim discovery as horse found dead

A HORSE was found dead in the canal near the Bonded Warehouse in Stourbridge last week. A council team went out to the site on Wednesday evening to remove the horse.

Anyone with information is urged to contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

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# Registration now open for festival charity run

REGISTRATION is open for a charity run that is expected to attract hundreds of runners onto the streets of Halesowen.

Representatives from Stour-bridge-based Mary Stevens Hospice have also committed to take part in The Black Country Road Run on July 5, which has been brought forward to that date to coincide with the Black Country Festival.

Hospice fundraisers are now calling on locals to consider choosing the Hagley Road hospice as their chosen charity.

Lucy Baylis, community fundraiser at Mary Stevens Hospice, said: "We have a few of the staff lined up to take part in this year's run and we hope to be joined by plenty of other local people. The more money we can raise the better as it all goes to helping us continue to provide specialist care for people living with cancer and other life-limiting illnesses."

Steve Edwards, chairman of the Black Country Festival community group, said: "We're absolutely delighted the hugely successful run has been brought forward so it becomes an official part of the Black Country Festival. We're very confident that this involvement will boost numbers at the run and help raise even more money for charity."

The Black Country Run organisers include Halesowen & Rowley Regis Rotary Club and Maurice Endacott from Halesowen Cycling & Athletics Club, who is race director.

See [www.theblackcountryrun.com](http://www.theblackcountryrun.com)

# Councillor gets in her peak condition

A COUNCILLOR who scrutinises 'health and wellbeing' is putting herself to the test with a gruelling challenge to climb three mountains.

Natalie Neale, Tory opposition health spokeswoman on Dudley Council, has been training for the Three Peaks Challenge this month. She will join a team raising money for the Midlands Air Ambulance. The 42-year-old mother-of-three will climb Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon. The trek scales 9,800ft with 25 miles of hiking and 1,000 miles driving in 24 hours.

Councillor Neale, who represents Kingswinford North and Wall Heath, said: "We are trying to encourage sports for everyone for their own wellbeing. I thought I should practise what I preach."

# Diesel fuel spill causes problem

MOTORISTS faced disruption after diesel was spilt by a vehicle, blocking one lane of a busy road in Quarry Bank.

A 300ft stretch was affected in Thorns Road on Friday afternoon.

# Titanic occasion as Maisie turns 103



Maisie Patstone, aged 103, celebrates

WHEN Maisie Patstone was born, the nation was still reeling from the sinking of the Titanic just weeks earlier.

And while the fate of the 52,000-ton ship would end in tragedy on her maiden voyage, Maisie was certainly built of stern stuff.

More than a century on she is still going strong and has just celebrated her 103rd birthday.

A party was held for the birthday girl at Beechcroft Residential Home in Salop Drive, where she resides, surrounded by her two sons and two of her great grandchildren.

In total, she has four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Her son Neville said: "She had strawberry tea with scones and a birthday cake. Strawberries are her favourite."

"We had a bottle of champagne to celebrate the day."

"Her relatives of her age have all gone so it was just ourselves, my brother and his wife and two great grandchildren."

Maisie was born in Katherine Road, Smethwick, in May 1912 as the youngest of three sisters. She went to

the Abbey Road School in the town before entering the tobacco industry as a clerk at Singleton and Coles where she worked until she had her first child Dennis.

She married Arthur in April 1934 at Harborne Parish Church. Five years later he went off to war and served in Egypt and Italy.

Maisie has been living in care homes for the past 16 years, first in Halesowen before moving to Beechcroft in 2012, and Neville, aged 78, believes it is that assistance which has helped prolong his mother's life.

# Traders facing nervous wait before latest march

MARKET traders in Dudley are determined that it will be business as usual on Saturday when a far-right group descends on the town for a protest march.

The march by the All Football Firms/Fans March Against Islamisation group takes place from 1pm.

Chairman of Dudley Market Traders' Association Len Lenihan said they had confidence in the police plans to protect the town and wanted to carry on as normal.

"We haven't opened the last two times because of the numbers of people the two groups were expected to bring. But these numbers never materialised," he said. "This latest group is not as established so we do not believe they pose a threat."

A petition signed by more than 60 business owners against the march, which will be the third such protest in the town since February, has been presented to council bosses.

Some shopkeepers have decided to close, saying they need to protect themselves and their stores. But a large number have confidence in police and council plans to protect the town's shops on the day.

Tony Swannie, owner of indoor market Plaza Mall, told a meeting that many were too afraid to open. Many were concerned because they didn't know for sure how many people would be marching - although police have dismissed reports of more than 2,000. He said: "I will try and open Plaza Mall. It didn't work last time. Most of them are scared to open. No matter how much encouragement I gave them, even offering them rent free, they didn't want to risk it."

Dave Carter, new co-owner of the Arcade Toyshop, said he was prepared to open but added: "One of the things that concerns me is that we have just had our insurance policy and we are not covered for civil disobedience."

Police say they can manage the march. A counter march is also planned.

The All Football Firms/Fans March Against Islamisation group insists it is not coming to cause trouble. In a statement the group said: "We are not a bunch of thugs, Nazis or racists. We are not coming to Dudley to cause trouble or distress, we are coming to have our say against the slow but steady Islamisation of the country. I would strongly stress to the local traders that they need not close up, we could even increase their custom for the day."



Councillor Khurshid Ahmed is involved in talks now taking place with both the Chamber of Trade in Halesowen and businesses in Stourbridge

# Project to BID up town business

PLANS to set up Business Improvement Districts in Halesowen and Stourbridge are moving forward, say council leaders.

The BID scheme will see firms join forces to create a single company, with each member paying a levy. Members will then get to decide how the money is spent.

The cash could be used to fund special events, improved security or promote the towns and make them more attractive.

Talks are now taking place with both the Chamber of Trade in Halesowen and businesses in Stourbridge. If supported, the proposals will go before council cabinet members.

Regeneration boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We are working closely with the Chamber of Trade in Halesowen on its proposals to enhance the town's In Bloom programme. They are currently working up a business plan which we hope to take to cabinet as soon as they are ready."

It is estimated that a BID company in Halesowen could generate £51,668 with a one per cent levy and £103,337 if it is set at two per cent.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Free health check for dogs offered

DOG owners can get their pet's health checked for free in Halesowen.

PDSA vet nurses will on Monday be at Quinbourne Community Centre, Ridgacre Road, Quinton, and Tuesday at The Hope Centre, Highfields Estate, Halesowen, both from 10am and 5pm. Microchipping, nail-clipping and ear-cleaning will also be offered free if required. They can also discuss dogs' diet, behaviour and answer questions.

They will also be at Warley Woods, Abbey Road, on June 17 from 10am to 5pm and on June 18 from 9am to 4pm. See [pdsa.org.uk/petcheck](http://pdsa.org.uk/petcheck) online.

## Royal Air Force band at Himley

THE Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment has joined this year's Armed Forces Day line-up at Himley Hall.

The event on June 28 will celebrate the work and sacrifices of servicemen and women.

The RAF band will be performing in the main arena. Under the direction of their Drum Major, Chief Technician David Cox and Band Master, Warrant Officer David Richards, the band will open formal proceedings in the arena at around 2.30pm and close the day by leading the spectacular Beating the Retreat at around 4.20pm.

## Pop-up fashion show at centre

A POP-UP fashion show will take place at West Bromwich's New Square shopping centre on Saturday.

Models will be on the move throughout the centre, performing high-energy dance routines and giving the public a glimpse of the hottest looks for men and women this summer.

All the clothes modelled on the day have been sourced from shops at the centre including Primark, River Island, JD and Blue Inc. Shows will take place between 11am-4pm on the day.

## Woman hurts head in fall while riding

A WOMAN suffered head and shoulder injuries after being thrown from her horse on Clent Hills.

She had hit her head as she fell at the beauty spot, near Stourbridge. It is believed she was dragged for a distance before coming to a rest.

Emergency services were called just after 10.30am on Saturday. Paramedics had to board an all-terrain vehicle to reach the woman on the hillside. She was taken to Russells Hall Hospital for treatment.

## Charity day at store

A CO-operative food store in Tividale hosts a family fun day on Saturday and has £5,000 to give away to help groups in need of funds. The event, taking place at the Regent Road store between 11am and 4pm, is being held in support of Newlife Children's Foundation and Help for Heroes.

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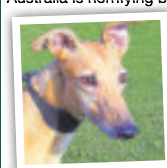


## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



I KNOW little about football and even less about Fifa. But it's not hard to understand why Fifa is revered in some parts of the world. Fifa gives them lots of money. To us in the affluent, oh-so-principled West, handing out dosh stinks of corruption. But across half the world's surface, that is simply how business is done: I want your support, so here's a little present. And while we in the developed world may gasp in horror at such practices, let's not forget that the worst financial crisis this planet has ever seen was caused by smart Westerners in expensive suits who would never dream of paying a bribe but siphoned off billions from honest little investors and caused more anguish in a few weeks than Fifa has caused in 100 years. When the Third World looks to the West for inspiration, what sort of example does it see?

THE report on appalling cruelty to greyhounds in Australia is horrifying but you don't have to go all the way to Oz to find it. Every year in Britain thousands of greyhounds, having reached the end of their career or failed to win races, are allegedly slaughtered or abandoned. Estimates vary between 4,000 and 12,000 healthy dogs killed every year.



In the United States greyhound racing has been outlawed in 39 states. Over here, the governing body, the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, says it is "committed to working to raise standards of care still further." The League Against Cruel Sports denounces the rules as "little more than a crook's charter" and continues the fight, doggedly.

CLIMATE change is taking the place of religion and, like all religions, does not deal in half measures; there is only right and wrong, good and evil, heaven and hell. But real life is shades of grey. Scientists in Africa report that a rise in greenhouse gases has actually increased rainfall south of the Sahara. The droughts are over. The land has blossomed. The people can at last feed themselves. For them (and for how many millions of others?) climate change is a change for the better.

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

# More than 5,000 at risk of losing home

**MORE than 5,000 homes across six areas of the West Midlands faced either repossession or having their tenants evicted in the past year.**

And one in 74 people in Sandwell alone are under threat of losing their home through eviction or repossession, new figures have shown.

Sandwell is the area most at risk with 1,652 claims for repossession or eviction with Wolverhampton close behind, where one in every 93 properties is under threat. There were 1,096 claims for repossession in Wolverhampton in the last year.

Housing charity Shelter compiled the figures revealing 840 people across the West Midlands were put at risk of losing their home every week.

In an analysis of statistics from the Ministry of Justice, the charity identified how many people are at risk of repossession.

### Staggering

Dudley had 941 cases of repossession or eviction claims – one for every 138 homes.

In Walsall it was 791 cases or one in 136. Wyre Forest had 411 claims, one in every 105 homes and in Cannock Chase it was 262 cases or one in 155 homes at risk.

The list of hotspots was based on possession claims issued in county courts between April 1, 2014 and March 31 this year. This

By Daniel Wainwright

was then compared with the number of households in the area recorded in the 2011 Census. The hearings are the first stage in a court process which can end with the loss of a home.

Shelter said the "staggering" figures show the impact of welfare cuts and shortage of affordable homes.

Alison Mohammed, Shelter's director of services, said: "These staggering figures show just how many people are fighting to keep their families in their homes."

"And this is after dealing with the double blow of welfare cuts and a drastic shortage of affordable housing."

"We're doing everything we can to give advice and support to anyone who faces losing the roof over their heads."

"But the Government must also play its part by putting a stop to further cuts to the safety net which helps ordinary families stay in their homes."

## Teenager has Swan Lake role



Ballerina Emily O'Connor, aged 16, from Lower Gornal

A SCHOOLGIRL ballerina from Dudley has the opportunity of a lifetime after being cast in a theatre production of Swan Lake.

Emily O'Connor will appear in her first professional production at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn after impressing a panel of judges.

The 16-year-old, from Lower Gornal, was one of nearly 200 young dancers to audition for English Youth Ballet.

She will play a swan in the famous ballet production at three shows in front of a large audience at the theatre on July 10 and 11.

### Four

It is the reward of a lot of hard work for the schoolgirl, who has been dancing since the age of four.

Emily studies GCSE dance at Ellowes Hall Sports College in Dudley, and also at Livingston Academy, a dance and drama school in Wednesbury.

Emily said: "It is going to be very exciting, obviously there will be some nerves but it will be good. It's a big opportunity."

Emily's dance teacher Rebecca Giles said: "She is an extremely committed young lady."

## Threats by road rage thug led to prison

A THUG from Dudley who terrified a woman motorist in a road rage incident has been locked up for seven months.

The woman drove into trouble when Karl Johnson was forced to brake sharply as she pulled out in front of him at a junction in Long Lane, Halesowen.

The victim feared her car was going to be rammed as the furious 28-year-old followed, tailgating her vehicle for some distance before he overtook her and forced an emergency stop.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that on April 19 father-of-three Johnson – who had a suspended prison sentence hanging over him for possession of a machete – got out of his vehicle, threatened to strangle the woman and told her: 'You are going to die'.

### Kicked

He kicked her car, damaging the bodywork, as she tried unsuccessfully to drive away.

Miss Samantha Crabb, defending, conceded that Johnson was completely in the wrong. Johnson, from Buffery Road, pleaded guilty to both using threatening words and behaviour and causing criminal damage.

He was jailed for eight weeks with a further 20 weeks added to the custodial term due to the suspended sentence order he had breached by committing a further offence.

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## Mayor's focus on borough volunteers

THE search for nominations has been launched for the best volunteers in Dudley. Awards for the Dudley CVS Volunteer Awards 2015 will be presented in October.

People and groups across Dudley borough are invited to put forward their favourite volunteers.

There are various categories for which awards are presented and the closing date for nominations is August 21. The awards ceremony will be held on October 15. Nomination forms can be picked up from borough libraries and Dudley Council Plus or downloaded from [www.dudleycvs.org.uk](http://www.dudleycvs.org.uk). Call Dudley CVS on (01884) 573381.

Dudley's new mayor Councillor Steve Waltho performed one of his first civic duties when he took a tour of voluntary groups in the borough. He began and ended his tour at the former day care centre in Stafford Street, Dudley, which has been extensively refurbished after being empty for more than three years.

Next stop was the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Coseley to meet representatives of Just Straight Talk, helping unemployed young people into work, education or training. He heard about the Coseley Big Local community project. Then it was over to the Beacon Centre for the Blind in Sedgley and he mayor was inducted as Volunteering Champion for Dudley borough.

## Mac call off concert at two hours' notice

TUESDAY night's Fleetwood Mac concert at Birmingham Genting Arena was cancelled at two hours' notice due to illness.

The concert by the Anglo-American supergroup, reunited with Birmingham-raised Christine McVie, has been rescheduled for July 7 at the venue. Tickets are valid for the rearranged show but refunds are available.

# Towpaths being upgraded in boost for cyclists and walkers

## Go hog wild for the elephant's tiny cousin



Customer services team member Robert Dickie with Tellie, one of the Madagascan tenrecs delighting visitors to Dudley Zoo

AFRICAN 'hedgehogs' Eccles and Tellie are stealing the show at Dudley Zoo.

The Madagascan tenrecs are starring in the zoo's Go Wild! shows, and appearing in school workshops after staff get them ready to greet young visitors at the Castle Hill attraction.

Customer services team member Robert Dickie has been doing handling training with the pair which, although they look like hedgehogs, are entirely unrelated to the spiny animals familiar from British gardens and hedgerows.

The lesser hedgehog tenrec is actually a cousin to such much larger animals as elephants, aardvarks, and sea cows and not closely related to hedgehogs at all.

Presenter Dorrie Hall said: "Eccles and Tellie are enjoying meeting our Little Zoo Keepers and school children and the visitors love finding out more about these fascinating creatures."

CANAL towpaths across the Black Country will be spruced up as part of a £4.2 million package of improvements to encourage cycling and walking.

Links between canals will be created and existing cycle routes refurbished as part of the scheme, with work to get underway this week.

The 'Managing Short Trips' project is being carried out by public transport co-ordinator Centro in partnership with the Canal and River Trust and councils in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Money for the scheme has been provided through a growth fund which supports projects that benefit the local economy.

Areas of canal towpath forming part of national cycle route 81 running from Aberystwyth to Wolverhampton will be improved.

Councillor Roger Lawrence, chair of the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, said: "We have already seen great improvements to walking and cycling facilities in our area through the Smart Network, Smarter Choices project and this scheme will really allow us to build on that."

### Funding

"This funding will help us breathe new life into some of the canal towpaths, some of which date back to the 18th century, and improve routes for people travelling by bike or on foot."

A section of national cycle network 54 at Pensnett Trading Estate in Kingswinford will be refurbished as part of the project, as will part of route five, which runs from Reading to Holyhead, at Smethwick. A towpath route from Walsall town centre to Midland Road will be established and links to Moseley Park in Wolverhampton created.

The Canal and River Trust has welcomed work which will see more than 16 miles of towpath improved.

## Switchers to save £300 on energy bills

RESIDENTS who signed up for a council scheme will see almost £300 a year slashed off their energy bills.

Dudley Council has been running the Big Switch, which saw a home energy auction take place. A total of 98 per cent of Dudley borough households who registered for the auction will make significant savings. The average saving per household will be almost £300.

Councillor Pete Lowe, leader of Dudley Council, said: "It's great that the Big Switch auctions are helping our residents to get the very best deals from energy suppliers. The tariffs offered are market leading and exclusive to scheme members. These rates are not available direct from the suppliers or via price comparison services. The £300 per year average savings per household really will help."

The next Big Switch auction is in October and open to residents from early August.

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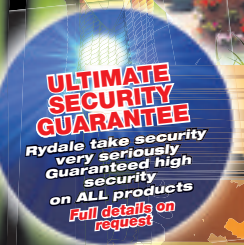
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IN MY VIEW  
with Mark Andrews

# No more a Brummie than I am a Scouser

JERRY Blackett, the chief executive of Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce is one of two things.

He is either an extremely clever wind-up merchant – and if so, congratulations Sir, you really had me going – or he is living proof of why all the talk of devolving power to the regions will only be bad news for the Black Country.

I suppose the clue lies in the name of his organisation, but his latest vision of Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall and the area known as Sandwell all being submerged into a city region known as ‘Greater Birmingham’ perfectly sums up while we should all run for the hills at any suggestion of a combined authority for the urban West Midlands.

Explaining his rationale, Mr Blackett explains that in years to come the world economy may be dominated by 50 truly international cities. And he fears that without annexing its neighbours into the great vision, then Birmingham will be left behind.

And what exactly has that got to do with us? Look I really don’t have anything against Birmingham.

As I said last week, it is a city which is unfairly maligned, and has much to commend it. But, how do I put this delicately? As a dyed-in-the-wool Black Country mon, I have got no particular affinity to it either. It is a decent city, but it is not my city. I am no more a Brummie than I am a Scouser or Scotsman.

**Languages**

I do go to Birmingham a few times a year due to the simple fact that we have lost most of the decent shops in Dudley, but every time I get off the train at New Street I am struck by the fast pace of life, by the sheer volume of human traffic, and the different languages being spoken. It might only be 10 or so miles away, but culturally, it is a world away from the Black Country.

Nearly 30 years since the end of the last failed attempt to force a common identity on these very different areas, the unlamented West Midlands County Council, it seems we haven’t learned a thing.

If there really is a need for regional government, and I’m far from convinced that there is, then it would be better to bring together places which are more similar in character, and have long-established cultural ties.

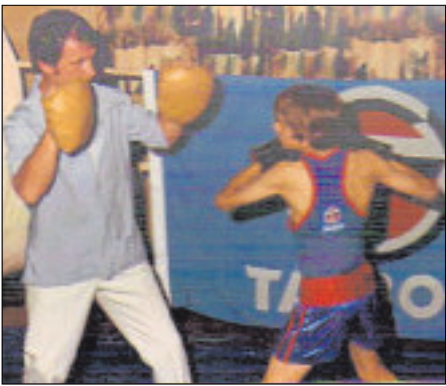
For example, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull would be a good fit, as would Wolverhampton, Walsall, Cannock and Stafford.

Dudley, Stourbridge and Kidderminster go together pretty well, and we could call these new regions, I dunno, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire.

To tell the truth, I’m amazed no-one has thought of it before.



Mayor of Sandwell, councillor Barbara Price, with Ernie



At the Talbot Amateur Boxing Club in the early 1980s



Ernie Locke seen training at Old Hill during the 1980s

# Civic honour packs a punch for coach Ernie

**RICHARD GUTTRIDGE** meets up with Ernie Locke, who had a knockout surprise when he received a mayor’s award

**FOR more than three decades Ernie Locke has taken budding young boxers under his wing.**

He has guided some away from a path that may otherwise have led them into crime, while also inspiring those who just wanted to reach their full potential as a boxer.

But as each potential pugilist has moved on from Old Hill Boxing Club in Cradley Heath, Ernie has remained, practice pads in hand, ready to welcome in the next gem in need of polishing. His commitment to the sport and to helping local youngsters has not gone unnoticed over the years and now he has been recognised for his hard work with the Mayor of Sandwell Certificate.

It was just another night of training at the gym, or so he thought, when the Mayor of Sandwell along with friends and family arrived to give him his award last Tuesday.

The 74-year-old grandfather admitted he was stunned to discover he had been nominated for recognition. “I am a bit shook up but it’s absolutely great,” said Ernie, who lives on Royal Oak Road, Rowley Regis.

**Chuffed**

“I was really taken aback, they kept it a surprise for me but now I’ve had some time to think about it I am really chuffed.”

Ernie was put forward for the mayor’s award by Jennifer Robinson, whose two sons, Aron, aged 19, and Brandon, 15, train at the gym.

Jennifer, 42, of Colley Gate, Halesowen, said it was about time Ernie got the recognition he deserved.

“He never asks for anything. He just does it for the love of the sport,” she said. “He was shell-shocked – he didn’t expect anything like that. His face was such a picture, he had no idea.”

Ernie has spent four decades training



**Ernie Locke, the boxing club’s head coach** youngsters, first at the Talbot Amateur Boxing Club in Birmingham, before moving to Old Hill, which is based at the Reddal Hill Community Centre in Cradley Heath, in 1984.

The impact that Ernie has on youngsters was perhaps best reflected by the appearance of Tyler Denny at the ceremony.

The Rowley Regis prospect trained with Ernie in his teenage years and is hoping to achieve big things in the sport, having appeared in his first paid fight in Brierley Hill last month.

He returned to the gym with other boxers to see his former coach honoured by Sandwell mayor Barbara Price.

Councillor Price said: “It was a pleasure to give it to someone like Ernie who has given his time over the years. It is all voluntary and people like that who give their time should be recognised and given something back. It was



Ernie, of Rowley Regis, with his certificate, watched by boxers, family and friends, at the club

such a shock, he knew nothing about it. He didn’t want anything back, he just gives and gives.

“It was thoroughly deserved and was a wonderful event.”

His son, also called Ernie, said the role his father had played over the years had been much more important than that of a coach, and that he had left a lasting impression on young boxers.

“He has dedicated 40 years of his life to it and 31 have been at Old Hill,” his son said.

“Rain or shine he is down that gym whenever he is needed. He takes all-comers no matter what background they are from.

“He has helped turn around the lives of people who have been involved in crime, they have gone on to get jobs and have got that respect back through doing it.

“He doesn’t take a penny. If anything he

puts money into the club.” His father was gripped by boxing from an early age. He boxed for his school, Britannia Road in Rowley Regis, before joining the boxing club at the Mitchells and Butlers brewery during the 1950s. It is a tradition

that has stayed in his family. His son Ernie was a professional boxer in the Midlands, appearing in around 50 fights, and now grandson Kieran has joined his club eager to learn skills from the master.

Ernie, who has eight grandchildren, admits he is still enjoying it, even if he can’t move around quite as fast as he used to.

“I am still enjoying it. It’s a bit difficult at my age but I still enjoy the match making and I still get in with the lads now and again,” he said. “I have enjoyed every minute of it and all the coaches who have worked with me have been good lads.”

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# Black Country could lose identity

GEORGE Osborne says: "Black Country will not lose its identity in a combined authority with Birmingham." If you believe that you will believe anything.

In 1086 Sedgley was a large manor taking in the area of what is now known as Dudley, then west taking in Cosley. As the villages gained their own identity, Cosley became the largest borough in the country.

In 1974 Sedgley and all the small villages in that borough came under Dudley and lost all identity. Cosley was split three ways to Wolverhampton, Dudley, and a place with

a metropolitan name that never existed, Sandwell. Many more across the country have gone the same way.

The agreement Osborne wants is the thin end of the wedge, big is not always the best. Money will be given to Birmingham, the smaller towns and villages will lose out again. If we all class ourselves as people from the Black Country we must fight against it. Write and speak to your councilors and MPs now.

**N D CADDICK**  
Cosley

## Safe place to cross is needed

I HAVE read with interest over the past few weeks with regard to the dangers for pedestrians crossing the road to access the wonderful facilities at Halesowen Athletic & Cycling Club.

I note that some opinions are that the club is in the wrong place! What an absurd narrow minded argument. I wish to point out that the club was there long before the dual carriageway. I also note that the Abbey was there before this very dangerous road was built!

We should encourage our youngsters to use this facility. It has a wonderful history and I know from personal experience that there are genuine community-minded people involved in the club whose only desire is to channel the energies of our young into sport.

Anyone who argues against a safe crossing should reconsider. Think of the benefits to the wider community if more people take part in sporting activities. Dudley Council install a safe crossing!

**M LEWIS**  
Kingswinford

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

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### EMAIL

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Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

## Once in a lifetime European Union deal

DAVID Cameron has the chance of a lifetime available to him to revise our membership of the EU. I hope he is not going to waste it as it will never come around again.

From reducing the impact of laws on business to securing the primacy of our own courts, we need the PM to get all that is necessary from the EU. To get control of benefits to EU immigrants who have paid nothing into our system and to rectify the lunacy of human rights legislation which allows foreign criminals to remain in the UK, is too big a concern for most people to not be put right.

The other members of the EU, especially Germany and France, cannot afford for us

to leave and, I believe, will be prepared to negotiate with us to ensure that, come the referendum next year, the British people will vote to retain membership.

The communal thinking of the British people during the recent General Election showed that they know when to make the right decision for this country.

I believe that they will know next year, when it comes to make the decision about membership of the EU, whether they have got a good deal or not.

I pray that David Cameron recognises this and takes the best advantage of this one chance.

**M CALLADINE**  
Kingswinford

## Bad Matisse impression

WHAT a fraud that Matisse the dog on Britain's Got Talent was not the one that walked the two parallel ropes on the final of BGT.

Had the three dogs come on together at the end of their act with Jules O'Dwyer, the people would have understood, but it would have made such a huge difference to the voting.

The public voted for what they thought was Matisse carrying out the full act. We were all duped by this fraudulent performance.

The magician Jamie Raven should be declared the winner and the £250,000 handed to him. It reminds one of the phone calls scandal some years ago.

So, Simon Cowell, do the right thing and award the title of winner of BGT to the magician Jamie Raven.

**B WHITEHOUSE**  
Kingswinford

## More made stroke aware

WE would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in our annual Rotary Stroke Awareness day on Friday, May 22.

We had an amazing day with 147 people having on-the-spot health checks in Tesco's Superstore at Burntree Island. It was a great success by promoting the FAST message and highlighting the importance of health awareness with quite a few people being recommended to go on to get further check-ups from the NHS. Once again thank you to all who were involved.

**ROGER EDWARDS**  
Dudley Stroke Association

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## Talk is just sweet from chocolatier

MyTime Over Fifties

MEMBERS and visitors were given a delicious talk by chocolatier Jackie Smith. She and her husband Alan have their own company Nova Chocolates and both are passionate about producing high class chocolate.

Alan acted as assistant, distributing samples, after Jackie had explained how to dissolve the chocolate slowly against the roof of the mouth to release its flavours.

Jackie gave a very informative talk on the history of chocolate, going back to the Amazon Basin where there are records of the Mayan people using the cacao bean as far back as 1500BC.

Beans were used for culinary, medicinal and ceremonial purposes. Women prepared the drink but only men drank it, as it was apparently too strong for women and children.

Cacao was introduced into Europe when Mayans were taken to the court of King Phillip of Spain in 1544. The drink spread slowly over the rest of Europe where work progressed in transforming the bitter drink to today's chocolate block.

Everyone listened to the health benefits of chocolate, but only if taken in moderation and as part of a healthy and diverse diet.

Meetings are at 2pm on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the Ambleside Room at Stourbridge Town Hall. The AGM is on June 24, when next year's programme will be announced.

## Jan and Gill double up for president role



President Jan Beeson, left, installs Gill Atkins as the joint president Wolverhampton Soroptimists

THE recent AGM saw the club move towards its 79th year when members reviewed activities during the previous year, thanking outgoing President Jan Beeson and her executive committee, before welcoming two presidents who will serve the club this year.

The new presidents are Jan Beeson and Gill Atkins. Gill acted as president in 1975-76 and is celebrating 40 years as a Soroptimist.

In her address president Jan said she and Gill had met on several occasions and planned their year together. They both had the same ideas and plans and Jan knew they were going to be an excellent team.

Their charities this year will be local and will include Land Mines. Social events planned so include a visit to the dogs, a boat

trip and a Burns Night supper. The annual dinner will be a luncheon, booked for November 29.

President Jan also installed new club member Louise Clive to SI Wolverhampton and hoped she would enjoy her membership.

Members of the club would also be attending the SI Midland Chase Annual Conference at the Park House Hotel, Shifnal, where Kevin Curtis of Footprints Orphanage would be giving an update and would be presented with a cheque for £1,637.55 from Wolverhampton SI.

This year, club member Carol Bailey is President of Midland Chase Region.

## MP becomes honorary member

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the MP for South Staffordshire the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson.

Kingfisher, Wall Heath, every Thursday evening at 6.45 pm and new members are always very welcome.

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# Appeal lost on jail term for revenge acid attack

A 'DANGEROUS' 80-year-old who plotted an acid attack on his teenage ex-girlfriend in revenge for her dumping him has been told by top judges he deserves every day of his jail term.

Mohammed Rafiq orchestrated the plan to disfigure his former lover, Vikki Horsman.

She was left with serious burns on her face, neck and body after acid was thrown at her by one of his accomplices. The doorstep attack on the nursing home carer, that took place in Tividale last year, left her scarred for life.

Rafiq lied following the incident and his web of deception led to three innocent people being arrested, before he was eventually found out.

The octogenarian, of Cheshire Road, Smethwick, was jailed for 18 years at Wolverhampton Crown Court in December, after being found guilty of wounding with intent and perverting the course of justice.

Rafiq challenged his sentence at London's Criminal Appeal Court, with his lawyers arguing it was 'too long' in light of his advanced years.

## Relationship

But his complaints were thrown out by three senior judges, who said allowance had already been made for his age, as he could have faced a life sentence or an extended jail term for the terrible offence.

The court heard Rafiq and Miss Horsman, who was 19 at the time of the attack, had been in a relationship but she had ended it. In the weeks before the assault, he had been putting pressure on her to get back with him. When she continued to spurn his efforts, he bought the acid and hatched a plot with two young accomplices -



Challenge - Mohammed Rafiq

Steven Holmes and Shannon Heaps. Miss Horsman answered the door to Holmes on April 15 last year and the acid was thrown over her. She suffered burns to eight per cent of her body, mostly on her face and neck, and had to undergo skin grafts.

Holmes, 25, of Queens Avenue, Smethwick, was jailed for 14 years with a four-year extended licence and 23-year-old Heaps, of Allan Close, was jailed for 12 years. They had both denied causing grievous bodily harm but were found guilty.

Rafiq's lawyers argued his jail term was excessive in light of his age and might well die behind bars. Dismissing



Attack victim - Vikki Horsman

his appeal, Lord Justice Beatson said the crown court judge had made allowance for his age by not imposing either an indefinite or an extended sentence - despite finding he was 'dangerous'.

Sitting with Mr Justice Spencer and Judge Nicholas Cooke, he added: "There is no new material that brings into play the need to take into account, in any greater way than this judge did, the appellant's age. The judge reflected his age in imposing a determinate sentence."

The judge said Rafiq would be free to apply to the Home Secretary for his release to be considered if his health deteriorates significantly in jail.

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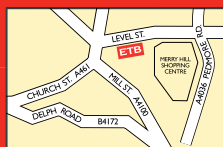
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hello to break the ambience.

There are 4 lounges to choose from each with its own unique personality. The front lounge is located within our specialised Dementia Unit which has recently undergone a full refurbishment. The Garden Lounge is the largest in the home with a bright and airy feel with countryside views and accessibility for

all residents to the outside Sun Terrace. We also have 2 quaint lounges which have a more private, intimate and relaxing environment, ideal for family visits and special occasions.

Yew Tree Nursing Home also has its own pets. We have Duncan the Shetland Pony, Gemma the Cat, Joe the budgerigar, John and James the Guinea Pigs and a brood of hens collectively called the Cheeky Girls. Pets often expand the sociability of older people and have a positive benefit on our residents well-being.

Yew Tree have also been awarded the 'Gold Standards Framework' in Care Homes. The GSF (Gold Standards Framework) is a systematic, evidence based approach to optimising care for all patients approaching the end of their life.



Yew Tree Nursing Home also organise day trips throughout the Spring and Summer and also have Stag and Hen Parties whenever a member of staff is getting married.

Yew Tree Nursing Home aims to provide its residents with a secure, relaxed and homely environment in which their care, well-being and comfort is of prime importance. All staff will preserve and maintain dignity, individuality and privacy of all residents within a warm and caring environment and in doing so will be sensitive to the residents ever changing needs.

**For any further information or to arrange a visit please call Carol Lightwood (Home Manager) of Vicky Mills (Business Manager) on 01562 710809**



## Yew Tree

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# 100 drivers caught out using mobiles at wheel

## Snake dumped at centre



Proteus Reptile Trust co-ordinator Amy Taranaski holding an abandoned corn snake now being cared for at Sedgley's reptile centre

STAFF at a reptile centre in Sedgley were given a bit of a surprise when they discovered a corn snake dumped outside in a box.

The orange snake was abandoned at the bottom of the driveway at the Proteus Reptile Centre in Catholic Lane where it is being cared for until a new home is found.

It is thought to be male and around six months old. Staff were alerted to the box when a cat that lives at the centre became interested in it.

Amy Taranaski, who works at the centre, said: "He was sniffing

around and tapping the box. It was good that we found him when we did otherwise he might have come to some harm."

Although the dumping of pets is more associated with cats and dogs, Amy said it is not uncommon to find reptiles left at the centre.

"It's a fad, they might buy it for their kids' birthday and then they realise they need a heated set up and rather than finding somewhere they just dump it."

The snake will go into quarantine for the next few weeks before a new owner can be sought.

A UNIVERSITY graduate checking emails and a mother running late to collect her child were among more than 100 drivers caught using their phone at the wheel by police.

Police branded many of the offenders with the acronym FOMOs - Fear of Missing Out - for those found to be updating social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter while on the move.

In a week-long crackdown by officers across the West Midlands, a total of 117 drivers were spotted making calls, texting or accessing the internet from their mobile phones. Others caught in the police purge include those using their mobile phone as a navigation device to get them to their destination.

### Campaign

Many of the drivers were handed three points and a £100 fine while others were offered the chance to avoid that punishment by attending a driver improvement course.

Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman, who heads up West Midlands Police Force Traffic, said: "One woman was caught calling her nursery to say she'd be late in the hope of avoiding a nominal additional charge, but she ended up with a £100 fine."

"One man admitted making a call despite hearing about the campaign on TV hours earlier, a graduate was spotted on Duncan Edwards Way in Dudley reading emails, and another mum was chastised by her own eight-year-old daughter after being caught."

"Both marked and unmarked police vehicles from West Midlands Police and the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) patrolled the region's motorways and 'A' roads during the clampdown between May 23-29."

They were supported by traffic 'spotters' in plain clothes who waited at major road junctions to identify offenders.

## Picture



## Recycle, Match & Win

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Short Heath United FC, one of the original teams to play in the Cup, in 1926



1928 FA Cup final ball



Shifnal Football Club, one of the original teams to play in the JW Hunt Cup

# 89 years on and Cup is still hitting the spot

IT has been held for almost 90 years – a competition which has seen hundreds of footballers compete for the region's bragging rights.

And this year, organisers of the annual JW Hunt Cup are marking its 89th anniversary with a display of framed photographs, old match-day programmes and medals.

## Amazing

The tournament, which was recently won for the second time in succession by Tividale FC, started in 1926 to raise funds for the benefit of local blind people.

When the takings from this year's tournament are counted, tournament chairman Alex Hamil MBE believes the grand total will stand at just over £300,000.

## MEMORY LANE

By Jordan Harris

He said: "It is wonderful to look back at the history of this tournament."

"It's longevity alone is amazing. Since it started, there hasn't been a year where it hasn't been held, including when the Second World War was taking place."

"This is what local football is all about and it is amazing to see how much the people in Wolverhampton love this tournament."

"The exhibition itself was a great success, people from all over the world who were visiting the Black Country Living Museum came and had a look, some even made a donation."

Former referee Mr Hamil teamed up with 2015 cup final referee Phil Reade, of Wednesfield, to publicise the display while it was at the museum at Dudley.

Each year, the final of the JW Hunt Cup, where teams compete

from the Birmingham, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire Football Associations, is held at Molineux. The inaugural winners were Short Heath United, who beat Cannon Iron.

The trophy is named in memory of John William Hunt, a local businessman and benefactor who founded the local Chillington Tool Company and was a supporter of local charities.

## Stronger

The firm's trademark was the 'crocodile', and the crocodile is incorporated into the trophy handles. Mr Hamil said: "I don't think the original organisers could have imagined it lasting this long."

"However, today we are stronger than ever and I am looking forward to the future of the JW Hunt Cup."

The JW Hunt history exhibition will next go on display at the Goodyear Pavilion Club in Stafford Road, Wolverhampton, on September 18, offering members of the public another chance to learn more about its unique past.



Looking at MBE medal, part of exhibition, is Alex Hamil



The MBE medal of JW Hunt Cup president Alex Hamil



Wolverhampton Referees Association's Phil Reade holds up ball

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# Dedicated Wolves fan Joseph dies aged 13

## New Harvey Nicks unveiled



The entrance to the new Harvey Nichols store in Birmingham which will showcase more than 200 of the world's most desirable brands

ONE of the biggest names in luxury shopping has unveiled a first peek inside its new store in Birmingham city centre's landmark Mailbox building.

Harvey Nichols is set to open next month and says its Birmingham branch will showcase a brand new design that will become the blueprint for its future stores.

Stacey Cartwright, group chief executive officer of Harvey Nichols, said: "This is a landmark moment, not just for our Birmingham store, but for Harvey Nichols.

"It is hugely exciting to be

launching our new design concept store in Birmingham. We believe we are creating an unrivalled retail destination for customers which will redefine the luxury retail market."

The 45,000 sq ft store is set in the heart of the Mailbox, which is already home to Emporio Armani as well as a string of restaurants, two hotels, and the local offices for the BBC.

The look of the new Harvey Nicks has been put together with leading retail design specialists Virgile and Partners.

A WOLVES Fan of the Year who won the heart of captain Danny Bath has died suddenly at the age of 13.

Joseph Thompson from Pensnett suffered from Duchenne Muscular Distrophy, a muscle-wasting disease that left him wheelchair-bound.

He died on Thursday after suffering a heart attack. The youngster had been admitted to hospital in Stoke on the Sunday before his death.

Joseph idolised Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, particularly defender Danny Bath who lived near him in Brierley Hill. Joseph was well liked by the players and management after regularly meeting the team coach at away matches.

Wolves say they are planning a significant presence at the youngster's funeral.

Joseph won a standing ovation from more than 600 people at the club's end of season awards dinner when he was voted the Express & Star's Wolves fan of the Year in 2014.

### Molineux

When he won the award, he hadn't missed a game for four years before being taken ill in March following a minibus crash which left him in intensive care in Birmingham Children's Hospital.

When he was well enough to attend a game again, the club treated Joseph and his family - all Wolves fans - to a trip to Molineux and they organised seats in an executive box.

His father Jason had taken Joseph to his first Wolves game, a pre-season friendly against Athletic Bilbao, and the youngster became smitten by Wolves. The youngster had even attended training sessions.

Watching Wolves became a family affair for the Thompsons, with father and son often joined by Joseph's sister Chloe and mother Jackie, a supervisor at Russell's Hall Hospital.

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## Grand night of giggles and guffaws

**Hilarity Charity Gala, Wolverhampton Grand**  
TOP comedians lent their support to the city's Central Youth Theatre for the second annual gala and this year the cause is more acute.

Due to cuts the CTY, several of whose past members have careers in showbiz, face being made homeless unless they can raise £20,000 to convert the former Co-Op opposite the Grand Theatre into their new base.

Katherine Ryan couldn't make it due to illness but the two biggest names, Russell Howard and Greg Davies, delivered. Both have been off the live circuit for a while and were ring-rusty but were eye-watering funny thanks to their charisma and through both having eccentric mothers as a source of material.

The slickest comics were Welshman Elis James, recounting a bath time incident that would make any man

wince, and special guest Rob Beckett. Toothy Celebrity Jungle spin-off host Beckett was spot on with tips on how to wind-up telephone cold callers.

Daniel Kitson kept the other acts and hecklers on their toes as an edgy, subversive MC, whilst sketch act duo Lazy Susan (half ex-CTY) were surreal and trio Pappy's (two-thirds ex-CTY) got one of the biggest laughs of the night with their dinosaur tennis sketch. **LB**

## Exploring a lexicon of laughs

Milton Jones, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**TOUSLE-HAIRED** comic Milton Jones is a master of word play. A pun-slinger beyond compare (apologies to Tim Vine), Jones has stolen many a comedy panel show with a well-honed one-liner.

He is rare among comics in that he doesn't swear or resort to smut, which in this era makes him a true alternative comedian. His Temple of Daft show has a loose quest story which explains him appearing in a beard and hiking gear as his explorer grandfather, Randolph Digby-Jones, before returning in his familiar loud shirt.

The gags come fast. Few miss their mark and pay attention because another will whizz by seconds later. 'Anyone here been caught up in a bank robbery, hands up', 'I come from a family of failed magicians, I have two half sisters', and so on.

While constructing a story of sorts out of his lexicon of laughs, he mused if it was good to be paid to pretend to be a dinner lady made out of cheese. Surely a pickle many would relish. **LB**

## REVIEWS



Twice dance — a scene from Northern Ballet's popular production of Madame Butterfly

## Passionate Butterfly takes flight for Northern Ballet's rare visit

**Madame Butterfly, Perpetuum Mobile, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre**

A RARE visit to the West Midlands by Leeds-based Northern Ballet was warmly appreciated by dance fans.

This melodrama danced to music by Puccini, choreographed by the company's director David Nixon OBE, has been a mainstay for Northern Ballet for more than a decade.

The parasol-toting little maid geishas made me fear a Japanese 'twice' ceremony but I was won over by the pain and sorrow expressed by Rachael Gillespie as the wronged Butterfly, abandoned by her American naval officer lover. Gillespie and Javier Torres, as the faithless Pinkerton, made a passionate and powerful pair in the

first act. Welcome comic relief came from Ashley Dixon as a matchmaker, Ayami Miyati as Butterfly's maid and Mindi Kulash as a pompous suitor.

Gillespie took centre stage in the second act with her suicide dance. Dispensing with Puccini, a Japanese lament played as, bathed in red light, Butterfly committed hara-kiri.

Before the grand drama, the company showed their energy and athleticism in Christopher Hampson's dynamic Perpetuum Mobile, danced to Bach's Volin Concerto in E Major.

Full marks to the company for bringing their own mini-orchestra to supply live musical accompaniment. **Leon Burakowski**

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## Toolstation store creates seven jobs

THE latest branch of tools, accessories and building supplies chain Toolstation in Halesowen has created seven new jobs.

The new branch, the chain's 11th in the West Midlands, opened on May 30 at Mucklow Hill Trading Estate, Mucklow Hill.

Branch manager Jas Saini said: "The opening of this branch in Halesowen is great news for the creation of local jobs as well as enhancing our presence in the West Midlands, enabling us to be closer to our busy customers. The team are looking forward to providing excellent service for tradespeople and home improvers in the area."

All branches open seven days a week and customers can use click and collect to order online and pick up t their nearest branch.

Toolstation, which started in 2003, now has more than 190 branches across the UK.

## Bit dead around here isn't it?



The Black Country's walking jed... zombie extras on set as filming takes place this week

THE zombie apocalypse has come to Birmingham and the Black Country — thanks to a major new movie being made in the area with screen legend Glenn Close and former Bond girl Gemma Arterton in the starring roles.

Six-time Oscar nominee Close, who played Fatal Attraction's bunny boiling maniac, and St Trinian's and Tamara Drewe star Arterton are co-starring with Staffordshire-born actor Paddy Considine in the horror blockbuster being shot in Halesowen, Birmingham, at Dudley's empty Guest Hospital and the nearby Black Country Living Museum.

She Who Brings Gifts is due for release next year and tells of a band of survivors trying to stay alive after most of the population have either been killed or turned into murderous zombies by a fungal infection.

## 3,000 hate crimes reported in a year

HATE crime is at its highest level in six years across the West Midlands, according to new figures.

There were more than 3,000 crimes with a racist or discriminatory element in the past year — the highest level since 2008/09. Eighty-three per cent were racially motivated.

Of the remaining crimes, just under nine per cent were homophobic, just over four per cent were religious, 2.2 per cent related to disability. There were 55 crimes perceived to be anti-Islamic, 14 crimes were anti-Semitic, and 28 were believed to be due to mobility impairment.

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Yvonne Mosquito said she was 'saddened' by the rise.

She said: "I must say I am saddened that we have seen this rise but, on the other hand, if it means more people are coming forward and reporting it because they have confidence in the police, then that is a good thing."

# Glassworks canalside homes development is welcomed

**A CANALSIDE estate on the site of a former glassworks is halfway to being completed — and some residents have already moved in.**

When finished the development on part of the old Stuart Crystal glassworks site, in Wordsley, will be made up of 48 homes.

Work on the 'Water's Edge' scheme next to the Stourbridge Canal began last year and developers Morris Homes hope to sign off by April next year.

Five homes are already being lived in and

bosses say the rest are quickly being snapped-up.

Anne Wild, the estate's sales advisor, said there has been a range of buyers.

"We have had a lot of people from the local area who are coming in and buying these properties," she said.

"They are talking about the great schools which are nearby and the ease of access to the countryside. Just five minutes down the canal and you are into an area which is great for cycling or running. We have also had people of all ages and it has ranged from first time buyers to downsizers and everyone in the middle."

Properties on the estate off Argyle Close range from 23 two-bed apartments starting at £129,750 to 14 four-bed detached homes which are going for up to £334,750.

Many of the homes, which have a distinctly modern appearance, have a direct view of the canal. Planning permission was approved by Dudley Council's development control committee despite concerns raised by some residents over possible traffic problems.

Immediately next to the development work is underway to transform the former glasswork buildings into the borough's new glass museum.

## Firefighters put skills to test

SIX firefighters are heading to Germany to take part in an international challenge to test skills dealing with traffic collisions.

The team, from Brierley Hill fire station, are representing West Midlands Fire Service after winning a recent road traffic collision skills challenge at Walsall fire station. They will compete in the Holmatro Rescue Experience, being staged as part of an international rescue exhibition near Hannover in Lower Saxony.

Some 30 teams from around the world are taking part and thousands of pounds worth of specialist rescue cutting equipment will be up for grabs. The team is crew commander Andy Papworth and Howard Rogers, Adam Tims, Dick Windsor, Chris Phillips and Kate Jones.

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## Memorials to stay put

FAMILIES have won their fight to stop memorial plaques being moved at Rowley Regis Crematorium.

Sandwell Council has done a U-turn after a petition by families upset by plans to phase out rose bed memorial plaques where their loved ones ashes had been scattered.

It had planned to phase out the memorials but now the council has agreed to let people keep their existing memorial plaques in the rose gardens.



## FOCUS ON BLACKHEATH AND ROWLEY REGIS

# Fines dished out for poor parking at commuter hubs

POST Office bosses are inviting residents to give their views on plans to move a town centre branch.

Blackheath Post Office would move 300 metres from High Street to Halesowen Street under the proposals.

Saturday opening hours would also be extended with the new store to open 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday.

Will Russell, regional manager, said: "We understand how important having a Post Office is to residents in Blackheath and we are confident that this new modern Post Office service will meet the needs of the local community."

Residents wanting to give their view can call a customer helpline on 08457 22 33 44.

The public consultation is due to close on July 9.

## Concern at factory site

CHILDREN have been seen playing on a dangerous disused factory site, prompting police patrols.

Neighbourhood police say they are concerned by reports of children on the site in Doulton Road, Rowley Regis. Patrols will be stepped over fears it has become an unofficial 'play-ground'.

A police spokesman said: "If you are the parent or guardian of any of these children, please educate them as to the risks."

**MORE than 400 fines have been dished out to motorists for poor parking at railway and metro stations in the Black Country, including 28 fined for breaking the rules at Rowley Regis Park and Ride.**

Centro introduced penalties to clampdown on nuisance parking at its park and ride sites last year.

Since the start of December, a total of 407 fines of up to £100 each have been given out. Of these, 202 were handed out at Stourbridge Junction and 128 at Sandwell and Dudley.

There will also 30 issued at Wednesbury Parkway, 28 at Rowley Regis, 13 at Coseley and six at Wolverhampton Priestfield.

Centro decided to take action after complaints about cars obstructing other motorists and forcing pedestrians to walk in the road while accessing stations.

Transport bosses say the scheme is proving successful as the number of fines given out is falling each week. The fines are reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days.

Centro spokesman Mark Langford said: "While parking notices continue to be issued their numbers are considerably lower than when the scheme was introduced."

"We are glad the campaign continues to have the desired effect by making

By Heather Large

people think about parking more considerably."

Meanwhile the park and ride car park at Cradley Heath Railway Station will be closed on Sunday as part of revamp work. It will be shut for 24 hours for white lines to be painted on the bays.

Vehicles cannot be left in any of the 260 spaces or on the service road overnight on Saturday.

Earlier this year, work on a 900,000 extension to the car park at Stourbridge Junction railway station was completed. An extra 223 spaces have been created, bringing the number to more than 1,000.

Centro and its partners have invested more than £15 million in Park and Ride facilities since 1997 to provide 7,718 free spaces within 59 car parks at 38 rail stations and three Metro tram stops.



Members of the A Better Blackheath Association are pictured in High Street, Blackheath

## BCHG is investing in community

THE Black Country Housing Group, which has its head office Rowley Regis, is marking its 40th anniversary by launching Q Communities, a project that looks at re-investing in the local community.

In Blackheath BCHG has worked with local groups to create A Better Blackheath Association, a grassroots community organisation helping people to improve the quality of life in the town and reinvigorate the local economy.

The 41-year-old social business manages more than 2,000 homes and provides a range of services to 13,000 people each year. BCHG, which employs 241 and had £12 million turnover for its last financial year, invests in people and communities across the Black Country and Birmingham.

Last year BCHG identified £495,000 of efficiency savings to launch a three-year social investment fund.

## Warning is issued over crimewave

CASH was taken from a victim in a robbery by a gang of youths - one of a spate of offences in the Rowley Regis and Blackheath areas that have prompted a police inquiry.

Police have alerted residents living in the area to be aware after a series of crimes over the past fortnight.

A gang of youths approached the victim of the robbery in Rowley Village and stole cash.

Police are also investigating a burglary at a house in Powke Lane where offenders have forced entry through a kitchen window.

Another burglary took place at a commercial premises in Station Road where thieves forced the shutter to get inside the property to steal goods.

The offences had all taken place between May 24 and Monday of this week.

## NatWest to shut branch

A BANK in Blackheath has announced it will close its doors on August 12.

Bosses at NatWest in High Street say it will shut after a drop in the number of customers using the branch.

The nearest alternative branch for customers, who have all been sent letters about the plans, is in Oldbury.

No jobs are at risk due to the closure with staff moving to other sites, the firm has confirmed.

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T. Hadley & Co was founded in 1895 by Thomas Hadley, then passed to his grandson Les Hadley in the late 1940's. The company was purchased by local funeral director Trevor Hickton in 1987 after a long standing professional relationship between Les and Trevor.

After being located in New John Street, Blackheath since the early 1900's, the office was relocated to more prominent position in Blackheath High Street in 2010.

Melanie Unwin Dip.FD was given the position of Branch manager and oversees the day to day running of the office as well as looking after the families on the day of the funeral, she is assisted by Funeral Administrator Angela on a daily basis.

As a funeral directors we offer a wide selection of funeral services throughout Blackheath, Rowley Regis, Hurst Green, Sandwell, Dudley and all surrounding areas. You can reach us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and we will always assist you with your funeral service needs.

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# George's medicine is hard to swallow



**WE don't have to have an elected mayor if we don't want one – although it's a bit like telling a hungry person they don't have to eat food.**

George Osborne met with council leaders from across the West Midlands to talk about devolution and the looming prospect of a combined authority.

But there are two elephants in the room. First the name Greater Birmingham, which Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper is adamant is off the table.

## Necessary

Although try telling that to the chambers of commerce for whom it rolls easily off the tongue, far more so than 'Midlands Powerhouse' or 'engine for growth', which are the buzz phrases used by MPs and the Chancellor.

The second is a so-called Metro Mayor. Mr Osborne thinks it's necessary to give some accountability to powers and funding devolved from Whitehall to the West Midlands.

He said: "The more powers we devolve the more there has to be some accountability." The Chancellor spoke of decisions that affect people locally being made locally. A Metro Mayor won't be imposed against people's will.

So on the one hand we don't have to have the mayor that would be a beefed-up, region-wide version of the one Birmingham and Coventry already rejected if we don't want it.

But on the other, if we don't choose



**Against name – Darren Cooper**

to have the elected Metro Mayor, there's a chance the government won't hand the combined authority 'the full model' of powers it's giving to places like Manchester.

George's marvellous medicine for the West Midlands involves giving our councils more power and control to get the economy moving. But unless he's happy with how our council leaders will administer it, it sounds as though he's still going to be holding the spoon.

After less than 10 months in control of Walsall Council, Labour have been shoved back into opposition.

The party remains the largest on the council with 27 seats while the controlling Tories have 25.

Mike Bird's Conservatives were



**Councillor Mike Bird**

propelled to power by support from UKIP and independent councillors.

Many will question what legitimate mandate they have thanks to this 'Blukip' stitch-up.

But Labour have to accept that the numbers were not on their side. I've added up the votes cast across the borough in the council elections and the Tories came out on top.

There were 45,461 ballot papers where people chose the Conservatives, compared with 43,115 for Labour.

Those figures only translated into a handful of extra seats for the Tories while their majority in the Parliamentary seat of Aldridge Brownhills was reduced.

The simple truth is more people wanted the Conservatives than Labour on May 7.

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# Problems caused by booze are worse in Dudley borough

THOUSANDS of people are being admitted to hospitals across the Black Country and Staffordshire because of alcohol, figures reveal.

And in the Black Country the numbers are higher than the average across England for 2013/14.

In Wolverhampton there were 1,566 people per 100,000 admitted due to booze, while the figures were 1,393 in Sandwell, 1,373 in Dudley and 1,321 in Walsall, with 1,105 in Staffordshire. The England average is 1,253.

## Composer's work set for debut airing

A NEW work by a Black Country musician and composer will be premiered at Birmingham Town Hall this weekend as part of a community concert.

John Barber, aged 35, of Bearwood, is a pianist, composer and music teacher as well as an active member of the City of Birmingham Choir.

His new work 'The Rain Queen' is a short piece for adult and children's choirs which includes recreating the sound of a rain storm by hand rubbing, finger clicking and body patting.

It took John six weeks to write and will be performed as part of the choir's Zimbe! concert at 2.30pm on Sunday.

Local school choirs and the Bournville Young Singers will be taking part in the concert. It also includes George Shearing's Songs and Sonnets by Shakespeare and Zimbe! by Alex L'Estrange. Tickets are £15 and £7.50 for under 16's, Call 0121 780 3333 or visit [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk)

There also continues to be huge variations between the most deprived and the least deprived areas – hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions were 55 per cent higher in the most deprived.

The figures also show a drop in the rate of hospital admissions due to alcohol among under-18s, which Public Health England said was evidence of a continuing decline in young people's harmful drinking.

Nationally, alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under-18s over the last three years are down to 13,725 – a fall of 41 per cent against the earliest comparable figures, 22,890 between 2006 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009.

However, locally under 18s admissions were all higher than the national average of 40.1 per 100,000, apart from Wolverhampton where the figure was 34.3. In Dudley it was 45.9, with figures of 48.8 in Walsall and 43.1 in Sandwell.

Professor Kevin Fenton, director of health and well-being at Public Health England, said: "The decline in hospital admissions from alcohol for under-18s is promising but current levels of harm caused by alcohol remain unacceptably high. This is especially true within the most deprived communities, who suffer the most from poor health in general."

## Tudor interest spiced up by event



Dressed as a Tudor servant is museum service manager Jane Hanney at the Oak House Museum

THE sweet smell of spices from times gone by filled the air at Oak House Museum during a day dedicated to the Tudors.

Visitors to the West Bromwich attraction were able to learn more about how the Tudors believed nice smells would keep away diseases.

They were able to make a pomander to take away with them as well as find out how spices were used 400

years ago. Sunday's Life of Spice event kick-started the Oak House summer season.

Other events in the coming weeks are guided tours of the historic house and a midsummer concert.

On June 17, between 6 and 9pm, the museum will be hosting an evening guided tour of the house and barns. Tours last approximately 45 minutes. Tickets should be booked and cost £2

per person. On June 21, a concert will be held in the grounds from 5pm.

There will be a licensed cocktail bar and the café will be open with help from the Friends of the Oak House Museum. Tickets should be booked and cost £4 per adult and £2 per child under 12. Visit the museum or call 0121 553 0759.

For more details log on to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/museumevents](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/museumevents)

## Watson bid backed by JK donation

BEST-SELLING author JK Rowling has given her backing to West Bromwich MP Tom Watson in his bid to become Labour's new deputy leader.

The Harry Potter novelist donated £4,000 to his campaign last month, according to a declaration by Mr Watson on his register of members' interests.

It is thought to be the first time that Ms Rowling has donated money to an individual politician and will be a major boost to Mr Watson's hopes of becoming the party's second in command.

The pair are believed to have got to know each other during the campaign to uncover phone hacking at the News of the World. Both were witnesses at the Leveson inquiry into press intrusion.

A crowdfunding campaign set up last month effort to raise £25,000 by the West Bromwich East MP already stands at almost £19,000.

A spokesman for the MP said: "Tom's delighted that JK Rowling has made a generous donation to his deputy leadership campaign."

"She is obviously a hugely talented and successful author but she is also a tireless campaigner for a range of charities and causes, particularly those that work on behalf of women and children around the world."

## Beers by bus mark Black Country Day

A BLACK Country Beer Day, led by the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale, is being organised for July 11.

The event, which will involve a trip around Dudley's best pubs by scheduled bus services, will take in eight pubs associated with local breweries.

It will be part of a series of events taking place across Dudley borough to celebrate Black Country Day on July 14.

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# fast the ticket

## A night at the ballet

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**NATIVE  
MONSTER**  
Entertainment Unleashed



**The Overtones**

Page 21

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Babbacombe, Looe & Devon Steam	<b>£219.95</b>
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## Elton John



**Saturday, 7pm**

**Banks's Stadium, Walsall**

Pop superstar Elton John and his band will visit Walsall on Saturday for a gig of a lifetime at Banks's Stadium as part of his European tour. This will be Elton's first-ever performance in Walsall. Visit [www.saddlers.co.uk](http://www.saddlers.co.uk)

## Shawn Klush – Elvis World Tour



**Sunday, 7pm**

**Civic Hall, W'ton**

Direct from the USA, the world's most successful Elvis tribute artist returns to the UK by popular demand. This show features Elvis's original backing singers 'The Sweet Inspirations'. Visit [www.wolvescivic.co.uk](http://www.wolvescivic.co.uk)

## Pierre Bensusan



**Monday, 7.30pm**

**Gatehouse, Stafford**

Over the past 40 years, finger style acoustic guitar virtuoso Pierre Bensusan has taken his unique blend of world, Celtic, jazz and folk inspired music to all corners of the globe. [www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk)

## Cosford Air Show



**Sunday, from 8.30am**

**RAF Cosford**

Grab your picnics and binoculars. This year's air show will feature a Vulcan bomber, helicopter display teams and of course the Red Arrows. Tickets have been selling fast. Visit [www.cosfordairshow.co.uk](http://www.cosfordairshow.co.uk)

## POP & ROCK

**Elton John**  
 Sat at 7pm  
 £40, £60, £80  
 Banks's Stadium  
 Walsall.  
 Call 0844-338 0338

**'Tele-Fest'**  
 Sun at 2pm - 6pm, 7pm - 11pm,  
 £10 - £12  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**The Searchers**  
 Sat at 7.30pm, £18 - £23.50  
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.  
 Call 01527 577330

**Limehouse Lizzy**  
 Sat at 7.30pm, £12 - £15  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**Judie Tzuke – Songs and Stories**  
 Fri at 7.30pm, £20  
 mac, Cannon Hill Park,  
 Birmingham, B12 9QH.  
 Call 0121 446 3232

**Shawn Klush Elvis World Tour**  
 Sun at 7pm, £32.45  
 Wolverhampton Civic Hall,  
 WV1 1RQ.  
 Call 0870 320 7000

**An evening with The Jam's Rick Buckler**  
 Mon at 7.30pm, £10 - £12  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**Soft Machine**  
 Tue at 7.30pm, £15 - £16  
 The Robin 2, Bilston,  
 WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**New Order tribute True Order**  
 Fri at 7.30pm, £10 - £12  
 The Robin 2, Bilston,  
 WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

## JAZZ & BLUES

**Gunnrunner**  
 Thu at 7.30pm, £7 - £8  
 The Robin 2, Bilston,  
 WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**Larry Carlton**  
 Tue at 7pm, £25  
 The Glee Club, Birmingham,  
 B5 4TD.  
 Call 0871 472 0400

**Chantel McGregor**  
 Wed at 7.30pm, £13 - £15  
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.  
 Call 01902 401211

**Rhythm & Booze Summer Music Festival**  
 Sat at 4pm, £10  
 Wolverhampton Rugby Union  
 Football Club, WV3 8NA.  
 Call 01902 763900

## FOLK & ACOUSTIC

**Irish Session**  
 Wed at 8pm, Free  
 Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston,  
 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.  
 Call 01384 374410

**Magpie Lane**  
 Fri at 8.30pm,  
 The Lamp Tavern,  
 Birmingham,  
 B5 6AH. Call 0121 622 2599

**Sandpiper Folk Club Night**  
 Wed at 7.45pm, £2  
 Pigot Arms, 11 High Street,  
 Pattingham,  
 Wolverhampton, WV6 7BQ.  
 Call 01902 700207

**Common Folk: Singers' Night**  
 Thu at 8.30pm, £1  
 Pelsall Cricket & Sports Club,  
 Walsall Road, Walsall,  
 WS3 4BP  
 Call 01922 682018

**Brewood Acoustic Club – Adrian Nation**  
 Thu at 8pm, £6  
 Brewood Cricket Club, Four  
 Ashes Road, Brewood,  
 ST19 9HX.  
 Call 01902 850422

**Country Music Nights**  
 Sun at 8.15pm, £2  
 Swan With Two Necks,  
 Longdon, WS15 4PN.  
 Call 01543 491570

**The Cadbury Sisters**  
 Fri at 8pm, £9  
 The Glee Club, Birmingham,  
 B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

**Pierre Bensusan**  
 Mon at 7.30pm, £14  
 Stafford Gatehouse,  
 Stafford, ST16 2LT  
 Call 01785 619080

## SOUL

**Newhampton Soul Club**  
 Sat at 8pm - 1am, £4 - £5  
 Newhampton Arts Centre,  
 Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.  
 Call 01902 572090

**Whitney – Queen of the Night**  
 Sat at 7.30pm, £21  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

## CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

**An Evening With The Overtones**  
 Sat at 7.30pm, £21.50 - £99  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham,  
 B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

**Chris Connor as Elvis**  
 Fri at 7.30pm, £15  
 Forest Arts Centre,  
 Walsall, WS3 1AG.  
 Call 01922 654555

**Musical Picnic: Midweek Explorer**  
 Wed at 10.30am, Free  
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham,  
 B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

**Welsh National Opera – The Magic Flute**  
 Fri at 7.15pm, £16 - £49  
 Birmingham Hippodrome,  
 B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

**Royal Opera House Live: La Boheme**  
 Fri at 7pm, £12 - £15  
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.  
 Call 01527 577330

## THEATRE

**The Elvis Years**  
 Sun at 7.30pm, £20.50  
 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
 WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

**Sing-a-Long-a Frozen**  
 Sun at 11am, 2.30pm, 3pm,  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.15pm, Sat at 2.30pm,  
 £9.50 - £45  
 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,  
 WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

**20 B&H – Delete When Done**  
 Mon at 8pm, £6  
 The Crescent Theatre,  
 Birmingham, B16 8AE.  
 Call 0121 643 5858

**Noises Off**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm,  
 £9.50 - £12  
 The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster,  
 DY10 2RX. 01562 743745

**Honk!**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,  
 £12.75  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch,  
 B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

**BMOS Fiddler on the Roof**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,  
 £12.90 - £18.90  
 New Alexandra Theatre,  
 Birmingham, B5 4DS.  
 Call 0844 871 3011

**The Coalition Kings**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,  
 £7 - £9  
 Blue Orange Theatre,  
 Birmingham, B18 6AD.  
 Call 0121 212 2643

**Sexual Perversity in Chicago**  
 Sat at 7.45pm, Sun at 2.45pm,  
 Tue, Wed, Thu at 7.45pm,  
 £6 - £11  
 The Crescent Theatre,  
 Birmingham, B16 8AE.  
 Call 0121 643 5858

**14/48 Wolverhampton**  
 Fri, Sat at 8pm, 10.30pm,  
 £5 - £10  
 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,  
 WV1 1SE. Call 01902 321321

**Let's Twist Again**  
 Fri at 7.30pm, £19.50  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**The Wizard of Oz: The Ruby Slippers**  
 Fri at 7pm, £5  
 Conquest Theatre, Bromyard,  
 HR7 4DU.  
 Call 01885 488575

**Movies to Musicals**  
 Wed, Thu at 7.30pm,  
 £9 - £45  
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.  
 Call 01527 577330

**The Show Must Go On**  
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm,  
 Prince Of Wales Centre,  
 Cannock, WS11 1DE.  
 Call 01543 578762

**Derek Acorah**  
 Wed at 7.30pm, £21  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**At Ease**  
 Wed, Thu at 7.30pm,  
 £10 - £12  
 The Old Joint Stock,  
 Birmingham, B2 5NY.  
 Call 0121 200 1892

## DANCE

**Carmina Burana**  
 Wed, Thu at 7.30pm, Thu at 2pm,  
 £16 - £47  
 Birmingham Hippodrome,  
 B5 4TB.  
 Call 0844 338 5000

**Pasha Kovalev**  
 Thu at 7.30pm, £20 - £24.25  
 Prince Of Wales Centre,  
 Cannock, WS11 1DE.  
 Call 01543 578762

## COMEDY

**Comedy Carousel**  
 Thu at 7pm, £5 - £19.50  
 The Glee Club, Birmingham,  
 B5 4TD.  
 Call 0871 472 0400

**Theo's Comedy Skool Workshop**  
 Sat at 7.45pm, £19.75  
 Palace Theatre, Redditch,  
 B98 8AE.  
 Call 01527 65203

**The Best in Live Stand-Up Comedy**  
 Fri, Sat at 7pm, £5 - £18.50  
 The Glee Club, Birmingham,  
 B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

**Jethro**  
 Thu at 7.30pm,  
 £19.50 - £20.50  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**Comedy 42 – June**  
 Fri at 7.30pm, £16  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**Comedy in the MET**  
 Sat at 8pm  
 £10.50  
 Stafford Gatehouse,  
 ST16 2LT.  
 Call 01785 619080

## OTHER EVENTS

**Cosford Air Show 2015**  
 Sun at 8.30am, £22  
 Royal Air Force Museum, Shifnal,  
 TF11 8UP.  
 Call 01902 376 200

**BBC Good Food Show Summer**  
 Fri, Sat, Sun at 9am,  
 £24.25 - £94  
 The NEC, Birmingham, B40 1NT.  
 Call 0121 780 4141

**BBC Gardeners World Live 2015**  
 Fri, Sat, Sun at 9am,  
 £22.50 - £94  
 The NEC Birmingham, B40 1NT.  
 Call 0121 780 4141

**The Quiz**  
 Tue at 7.30pm, Free  
 Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston,  
 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.  
 Call 01384 374410

**Simon Smith Cookery Demonstrations**  
 Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm, £12  
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.  
 Call 01543 412121

**Camra Beer Festival**  
 Fri, Sat, 12noon - 11pm  
 Wulfrun Hall,  
 Wolverhampton  
 WV1 1RQ  
 Call 0870 320 7000

**Big Fat Quiz Night**  
 Thu at 5pm, Free  
 Subside Bar, Paradise Place,  
 Birmingham, B3 3HJ.  
 Call 0121 212 0211

## TALKS

**Barber Lecture Series**  
 Wed at 1.10pm, Free  
 Barber Institute of Fine Arts,  
 University of Birmingham,  
 B15 2TS. Call 0121 414 7333

**Royalist Rebel**  
 Tue at 7pm, £7  
 The Commandery, Sidbury,  
 Worcester, WR1 2HU.  
 Call 01905 361821

## OPEN MICS

**Sunday Shenanigans – Open Mic night**  
 Sun at 8pm - 12pm, Free  
 Mochers, Stourbridge,  
 DY8 1PH.  
 Call 01384 671141

**Open Mic Night**  
 Mon at 8.30pm, Free  
 Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston,  
 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.  
 Call 01384 374410

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star



# Classic soul tunes get new Overtones



Soul music really hits you in the heart — The Overtones are in harmony over 1960s favourites on Sweet Soul Music

AFTER three consecutive top five albums, sales of 750,000 and three headline tours, The Overtones reinvent soul music from the 1960s on fourth album Sweet Soul Music and at their Birmingham concert at the Symphony Hall on Saturday.

"They're all classic songs which ruled the airwaves," says Timmy Matley. "It's been a real pleasure to take on these big songs, we've stretched our voices — our vocal abilities, our

harmonies, our whole approach and moved into a different gear."

"Apart from making you dance, soul music really does hit you in the heart," adds Lachie Chapman. "There's also often such a beautiful sentiment behind these songs which is why we're still listening to them 50 years later."

The Overtones' three albums to date — Good Ol' Fashioned Love (2010), Higher (2012) and Saturday

Night At The Movies (2013) — established their reputation as a group to deliver consistently uplifting music infused with exquisite vocal harmonies.

Recent months have seen the boys join forces with Michael Ball on Let It Be Me, the first singletaken from his new album If Everyone Was Listening. Timmy Matley also triumphed as the winner of BBC Children in Need's Great British Sewing Bee.

## Dazzling Sun King ballet

BIRMINGHAM Royal Ballet next week unveils a brand new production from David Bintley as he celebrates 20 years as director of the Midlands' own ballet company.

The King Dances gets its premier at the BRB's home theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome, on Wednesday, June 17, as part of a double bill with Carmina burana, the first ballet that Bintley created for the company.

The King Dances draws inspiration from an episode in 1653 when the teenaged King Louis XIV earned his title as the Sun King by playing the role of Apollo in a ballet staged for the royal court. The King Dances promises to be a visually striking spectacle. Award-winning designer Katrina Lindsay has spent months creating a world of werewolves and witches.

The production will be the focus of a BBC Four documentary to air in September where David Bintley will retrace the steps of Louis XIV in locations around France as well as going backstage during the creation of the ballet. The programme will feature a full screening of the production too.

Carmina burana is a thrilling epic danced to Carl Orff's dramatic choral music, that will be performed by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia with Birmingham's Ex Cathedra choir. The double bill will be performed until June 20. Then, from June 24 to 27, BRB stage time-travelling romantic comedy Sylvia with a cast of god, goddesses, slave girls and pirates. It features a lush score by Leo Delibes, again choreographed by David Bintley. For tickets see [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com) or call 0844 338 5000.



Sylvia has gods, goddesses, slave girls and pirates

### Innocent theme for opera season

'A Terrible Innocence' is the theme for Welsh National Opera's works this weekend at Birmingham Hippodrome.

Richard Ayres' Peter Pan, based on the classic JM Barrie story of the magical boy who never grows up, is staged tonight (Thursday) with Iestyn Morris as Pan. It is followed tomorrow by Dominic Cooke's warm and witty production of Mozart's The Magic Flute. Kathryn Lewek will make her company debut with WNO as Queen of the Night.

On Saturday WNO stage their new production of Debussy's dreamlike Pelléas and Mélisande.

For tickets contact Birmingham Hippodrome.

### Derulo announces city arena show

TICKETS have recently gone on sale for a series of newly announced concerts in Birmingham.

These include Want To Want Me chart-topper Jason Derulo at the city centre's Barclaycard Arena on January 30, 2016.

Take On Me Norwegian 80s pop sensations a-ha, featuring Morten Harket, are back with their first tour in five years to bring their Cast In Steel show to the Barclaycard Arena on March 29.

Before that Will Young returns to the pop circuit with a gig at the Symphony Hall on November 4 as part of his Love Revolution tour.

### Doddy Dudley date for a diddy delight

VETERAN funnyman Ken Dodd has announced he's on his way to the Black Country.

The 87-year-old comic from Knotty Ash will bring his Happiness show to Dudley Town Hall on Saturday, June 20 — maybe fans should think about packing a flask and sandwiches as the iconic Scouse comedian's shows have a reputation for lasting a long time. Tickets for the 7pm show are £19 stalls and £22 balcony, online at [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) or call the box office on 01384 812812 or 0870 320 7000. Booking fees apply.

The next chance to see Doddy locally will be at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on December 13.

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# Knights Quest

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Traditional painted ceramic craft work is popular



Essaouira is well-known to water sports fans for near perfect conditions



Bright blue fishing boats bobbing in the harbour

# No need for hard sell, this wonderful breezy city will just blow you away

**WHILE** walking down a narrow, shaded alleyway in Essaouira's historic Medina, I am immediately drawn to a shop covered in colourful painted ceramic plates.

I approach with caution. This is Morocco, after all, the place where, I'm told, you're hassled by overzealous traders demanding you part with your dirhams in exchange for their goods – whether you want to or not.

Gingerly, I start browsing, expecting the shopkeeper to pounce on me any second, but I'm left well alone. In fact, the only sound I'm aware of is a couple of kittens play-fighting in the doorway. A four-hour drive west from Marrakech, Essaouira has always been a popular bolt-on, providing much needed respite from the intense pace

By Katie Wright

of Morocco's most popular city-break destination. But a new direct four-hour flight with easyJet from Luton means tourists can bypass the chaos and come straight to this sleepy coastal town.

I've based myself at the Sofitel Mogador Golf and Spa Hotel, a 10-minute drive from the centre, with views to the Atlantic Ocean. Although elegant and modern, the property has many traditional touches.

But most of the action takes place close to the seafront Medina, a UNESCO World Heritage Site recently used as a film location for Game Of Thrones.

Alongside the tourist-friendly shops, selling ceramics, leather goods and carved thuya wood furniture, the busy main drag is lined with stalls stocking essentials for the medina's full-time residents. The town

is also packed with traditional houses called riads. I duck into the cool courtyard of one of these intricately tiled homes for my first taste of the country's most famous drink.

Also known as the whisky of Morocco (but without the booze, obviously), fresh mint tea is served in gilt-edged glasses and poured from a height to create the all-important foamy head.

## Legend

Fishing is Essaouira's primary industry, and fresh seafood stalls can be found all along the waterfront.

At La Chalet de Plage on Avenue Mohammed V, we grab a table on a verandah overlooking the sea and order huge platters of deliciously salty oysters, meaty prawns, sizzling calamari and spiky sea urchins. It's all washed down with glasses of local wine (not bad at all), while owner Jeannot tells a story about the time Jimi Hendrix paid

a visit to drink a beer and smoke a joint. Everywhere you go in Essaouira, tales of the rock legend's sojourn here in the summer of 1969 abound.

Venturing back to the medina after sunset, the streets are buzzing as I make my way to the Hotel Riad Al Madina for a taste of Gnawa, traditional music.

A three-piece band plays as percussionists dance into the hotel's courtyard. Metal krakebs and bbal drums beat a frantic rhythm and the melody of the lute-like sintir is echoed with chants from the dancers.

Early the next morning, I head to the beach. During the windy season, from April to September, Essaouira is a water-sport paradise.

If you enjoy non-stop sunbathing, Essaouira's breezy climate might be off-putting, but for me it's a small price to pay.

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FILM CHOICES

**MONDAY**  
**Crimes of the Mind, Channel 5, 3.10pm**  
Carolyn Raeburn signs her 16-year-old daughter Laura up for a few weeks of horse-riding lessons at a remote ranch, but the teenager ends up being brainwashed by a woman who grooms her to take the place of her own murdered child. Carolyn spends the next five years of her life and more than half a million dollars fighting to get her Laura back. Fact-based thriller, starring Christina Cox and Paula Trickey. (2014)

**TUESDAY**  
**Creation, BBC1, 11.25pm**  
Biopic of Charles Darwin, examining the formation of the 19th-century naturalist's ground-breaking theories of evolution in the wake of his daughter's death. As he prepares to share his ideas, he begins to fear the impact his findings may have on the world – and on his relationship with his devoutly Christian wife. Starring Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly. (2009)



Creation, Tuesday, BBC1, 11.25pm

**WEDNESDAY**  
**The Death and Life of Charlie St Cloud, Channel 4, 2.25am**  
A man who survived the car crash that killed his brother becomes consumed with guilt. Taking a job in a cemetery, he begins seeing visions of his dead sibling and spends every night in the graveyard with him. Drama, starring Zac Efron. (2010)

**THURSDAY**  
**Imaginary Friend, Channel 5, 3.15pm**  
A woman experiences visions of her childhood imaginary friend, whom she created for emotional support while being abused by her father. Fearing she is losing her mind, she takes drastic measures to rid herself of the hallucinations. Thriller, starring Lacey Chabert and Ethan Embry. (2012)

**FRIDAY**  
**The Lady, BBC2, 11.25pm**  
Biopic of Burmese politician and democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi, who was placed under house arrest by the country's military junta following a disregarded general election in 1990. She spent the next 15 years as a political prisoner, campaigning for free elections. Starring Michelle Yeoh. (2011)

Famous faces take on the culinary challenge

Can you believe it's been nearly a year since actress Sophie Thompson beat fellow finalists Charley Boorman and Jodie Kidd, to be crowned Celebrity MasterChef champion?

Perhaps that's because the MC franchise is rarely off the air. Nevertheless, John Torode and Gregg Wallace return with the 'Sleb' version tonight, putting their taste buds through a range of lip-smacking and possibly distasteful dishes, as they seek out which stars have the palate and skill to secure a place in the semi-finals.

This summer, a sizzling line-up from the worlds of music, sport and showbiz will be on air to satisfy your telegenic palate by battling it out in the show's 10th anniversary series.

The 20 apron-clad celebrities hoping to follow in the footsteps of Thompson, are actors Scott Maslen, Tish Potter, Craig Gazey, Amanda Donohoe and actor and presenter Sheree Murphy; soul singer and presenter Mica Paris; former Girls Aloud singer Sarah Harding; Pussycat

Doll Kimberly Wyatt; The Wanted singer Tom Parker; singer-songwriter Chesney Hawkes; one half of TV presenter duo Sam and Mark, Sam Nixon; presenters Keith Chegwin, Andy Akinwolere, Most Haunted presenter Yvette Fielding, and TV presenter and singer Rylan Clark; comedian Syd Little; choreographer Arlene Phillips; journalist, writer and broadcaster Samira Ahmed; professional dancer Natalie Lowe; and British Paralympian world-record-holder Danny Crates.

Executive Producer for the BBC, Carla-Maria Lawson, says: "This year's intake of celebrities are among the most skilled to brave the MasterChef challenge. Their culinary journey makes for a thoroughly entertaining and thrilling ride."

The first four weeks concentrate on whittling down the celebrities, and testing their abilities until the best eight go through to the fifth and semi-final week.

This first episode sees Harding, Hawkes, Fielding, Murphy and Potter face the infamous invention test.

Then, two of the celebs are thrown in at the deep end and Asian cuisine specialists, Novikov, while the other three try to deliver the award-winning modern menu of Sixtyone.

Finally, back at MasterChef HQ, the contestants prepare a two-course menu of their own choosing before John and Gregg make their decisions.

Two celebrities from each heat week make it through to the semi-finals, where they must endure even more nerve-racking culinary trials, before the sixth and final week sees the remaining, and now hopefully impressive cooks, draw on all the skills they have learnt, when they face not only Torode's tricky Palate Test, but also the notorious restaurant critics in the terrifying Critic's Test.

After this, they return to MC HQ and cook their best three-course meal for John and Gregg, before the judges decide who is the true cooking star worthy of following in the footsteps of previous winners Thompson, Ade Edmondson, Emma Kennedy, Phil Vickery, Lisa Faulkner, Jayne Middlemiss, Liz McClarnon, Nadia Sawalha and Matt Dawson.



John Torode and Gregg Wallace in Celebrity MasterChef, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

**MONDAY**  
**The Met BBC1, 9pm**  
Detective John Sandlin investigates when a 34-year-old father is mistaken for another man and stabbed to death outside a pub in central London, while DS Tracey Miller is on the hunt for a sex offender who has been targeting Muslim women in the Brixton area. Notting Hill Carnival is the biggest event in the Metropolitan Police's calendar, with 13,000 officers on duty over the August bank holiday weekend, and the pressure is on for them to balance the carnival spirit with keeping the public safe.

**Kevin McCloud's Escape to the Wild Channel 4, 9pm**  
The Grand Designs presenter travels to the foothills of the Andes in Chile to meet a family of five from south London who quit the daily grind to build a new home in the shadow of an active volcano. Kevin arrives at the site on horseback to discover that Jago and Lucy are still in the process of constructing their new home using bags filled with soil and timber from the local forest, which they transport by oxen. He is impressed by the structure, but troubled by one key question. Why choose to live next door to a highly volatile volcano?

**TUESDAY**  
**Attenborough's Big Birds: Natural World BBC2, 8pm**  
Meet the big birds, a feathered family who've never flown a day in their lives. From ostriches to kiwis, these bizarre avian adventures appear to be one of nature's greatest novelty acts. How they came to be and how they continue to survive is a fascinating tale that has long captivated David Attenborough. In this programme, he explores their secrets, telling a story of dedicated dads, enormous eggs and a serious need for speed.

**Dara O Briain meets Stephen Hawking BBC1, 10.35pm**  
Since he was a teenager, motor-mouthed comedian Dara O Briain has been fascinated by theoretical physics and the work of Professor Stephen Hawking, one of the world's most celebrated scientists. In this film, Dara spends time with his boyhood hero at his home and place of work in Cambridge, interviewing Hawking's family and friends to gain an insight into the daily life of a man whose theories have had a huge impact on the general populace.



Dara O Briain meets Stephen Hawking, Tuesday, BBC1, 10.35pm

**WEDNESDAY**  
**DIY SOS: The Big Build BBC1, 8pm**  
Wednesday is fast becoming the most emotional night of the week – anyone in need of a good sob can watch DIY SOS and then turn over to ITV for Long Lost Family. This Big Build looks set to be particularly moving, as it introduces us to Hull couple Liz and Jason Liversidge, who married in 2009 and quickly started a family. However, just as Jason embarked on doing up a house, he was diagnosed with the rare genetic condition Fabrys disease.

The couple were shocked to discover that their two daughters would also have the same condition, and they received another blow, as Jason was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. Can Nick Knowles and the team ensure the Liversidges have a home that meets their needs,?

**THURSDAY**  
**The Tribe Channel 4, 9pm**  
Documentary about a rural African tribe living together in four mud huts in southern Ethiopia. It's a stressful time for family elders Ayke Muko and Kerri Bodo, whose son is due to get married to a girl from a neighbouring village. However, after failed dowry negotiations, relations between the two families have broken down. Meanwhile, their only daughter remaining at home is Hacho, who is next in line to marry. As she clings on to her last few months of freedom, she skips family dinners, dishes out endless backchat and steals her mother's money – just like any other rebellious teenager.

**FRIDAY**  
**Sarah Millican Home Bird Live Channel 4, 10pm**  
The British Comedy Award's Queen of Comedy returns with a brand new live show filmed during her sell-out nationwide tour, Home Bird. Performing to her home crowd at the Newcastle Tyne Theatre, the South Shields lass describes how she is becoming more domesticated, giving up the party scene (well, Ann Summers), easing off on the drinking (fizzy pop equals wealthy dentists) and is settling down (taking her bra off).

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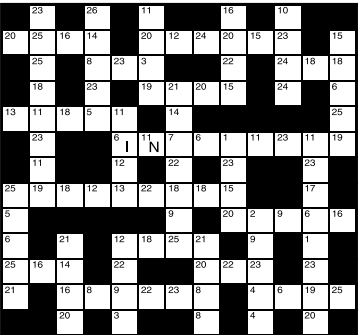


BRAIN GYM

No.329

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

R	N	Y	A	T	Q	H	D	F	X	M	V	G
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	U	I	K	B	L	O	W	C	S	Z	E	P

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

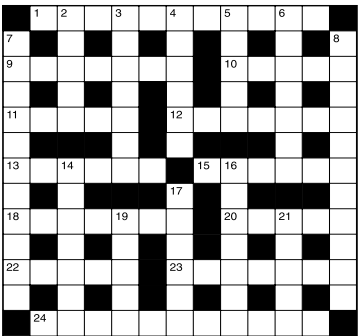
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Setting a lofty tone in a mountain camp? (4-7)
- Very hard worker after a mad frolic (7)
- I had one to return to the fool (5)
- Actress loses current hair (5)
- Give square markings to the chancellor's ex-followers? (7)
- Assemble again in an improved manner? (6)
- Stress what the foreigner may have (6)
- Anger in worship? (7)
- Pressed to take back some brigade grumbles (5)
- Rebuke so that 100 go into concealment (5)
- Abuse to soothe temper? (7)
- Angrily dined to excess (11)

Down

- I am so old on reflection (5)
- Or share out with a less clear voice? (7)
- Without loss in diplomacy (6)
- He enables 100 to survive (5)
- Gourmet finds the remedy - undercooked pie! (7)
- Teacher takes a bit to produce his best work (11)
- Like a top football team's boots? (4-7)
- Tonic, if taken thus, isn't true! (7)
- Reckoner needed in shop? (7)
- Compensate about successful stroke (6)
- Relation of egghead in French resort (5)
- Political corruption in the nursery? (5)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Suitable (11)
- Struggle (7)
- Mindful (5)
- Extravagant (5)
- Detectives (7)
- Tax (6)
- Starry (6)
- Base (7)
- Impudence (5)
- Joint (5)
- Paltry (7)
- Sharp (11)

Down

- Equipment (5)
- Crush (7)
- Gratify (6)
- Silly (5)
- Turncoat (7)
- Shameful (11)
- Stupidly (11)
- Thoughtful (7)
- Live (7)
- Improve (6)
- Spree (5)
- Arrange in line (5)

Sudoku

	4			5		2		8
	1	6			4			
9				7			3	6
		2	4			5		1
	6		2		5			
4	3				6		9	
6				8				4
			1			3		
2	1				3	6	5	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	8	2	6	2	5	9	7	3
2	7	5	1	4	3	5	8	9
3	5	6	9	7	8	1	2	4
6	2	8	3	5	9	7	4	1
7	1	3	8	6	4	3	5	2
9	4	3	7	1	2	5	6	9
4	9	1	5	3	6	2	8	7
8	6	7	2	9	1	4	3	5
5	3	2	4	8	7	6	1	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Grandest; 5 Verb; 9 Smug; 10 Japanese; 11 Filly; 12 Barrack; 13 Secretaryship; 18 Innuendo; 19 Able; 20 Frattle; 21 Indus; 22 Roan; 23 Impudent. Down: 2 Remorse; 3 Niggler; 4 Starboard beam; 6 Eyewash; 7 Break up; 8 Fairly; 13 Skipper; 14 Cantata; 15 Events; 16 Stained; 17 Ill-tum. QUICK - Across: 1 Appendix; 5 Odds; 9 Free; 10 Assassin; 11 Rural; 12 Gesture; 13 Objectionable; 18 Teutonic; 19 Sick; 20 Amnesia; 21 Cover; 22 Tell; 23 Strident. Down: 2 Perturb; 3 Elevate; 4 Insignificant; 6 Disturb; 7 Sincere; 8 Damsion; 13 Outcast; 14 Journal; 15 Choose; 16 Abscond; 17 Lectern.

Quiz

- Which comedian's real name is Joseph Levitch?
- Who was shot by Nathuran Godse on September 17th, 1948?
- Which poet wrote The Lake Isle of Innisfree?
- What, according to the Beaufort Scale, is a wind of 64-72 m.p.h.?
- What is dendrophobia the fear of?
- In which year was the Mary Celeste found unmanned near the Azores?
- Who won the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize?
- In which musical is the song 76 Trombones featured?
- Which instrument did Glenn Miller play?
- What is the capital of Chile?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen; 2 The Crimean; 3 1909; 4 Swede; 5 Portugal; 6 The Unfinished Symphony; 7 Wilson; 8 Laika; 9 A belltower; 10 Spree.  
Niner: DEPLORING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

5439 gives a hybrid mammal,  
3728 gives a wild animal,  
126 gives a kind of horse.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



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# Three-bedroom house is in a desirable location



**IN a sought-after area, this well-maintained three-bed-roomed property in The Alley, Gornal Wood, is for sale through Swinscoes at £144,950**

With double glazing and gas central heating, it has a porch, an entrance hall with stairs off and laminate flooring, well-equipped kitchen and a spacious lounge leading on to a substantial conservatory.

There is an integral garage and off-road parking, and to the rear a patio with steps down to a pleasant lawned area.

Contact Swinscoes on 01902 672274 or visit [www.swinscoes.co.uk](http://www.swinscoes.co.uk)



# Semi-detached home with a conservatory



**THIS impressive three-bedroom semi-detached residence with spacious accommodation is in Hadley Close, Dudley. It is for sale through Skitts estate agent at £164,950.**

With central heating and double glazing, it has an entrance hall, a 24ft living/dining room with a feature fireplace and patio doors to a conservatory, and a substantial kitchen with appliances.

There is also a shower room, L-shaped bedroom with en suite, two further bedrooms, a further shower room

The property has a rear garden with patio and decking. There is a garage.

For further information contact Skitts on 01902 686868 or visit the [www.skitts.net](http://www.skitts.net) website.



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**HALESOWEN, Longmoor Road£850 pcm+Fees**  
 An immaculate & wonderfully presented 3 bed Maccloskey style semi-detached property featuring: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, lovely laid out private rear garden, 2 double bedrooms, 1 extended single bedroom, modern bathroom with shower, garage, driveway parking for 2/3 cars, gas central heating & double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutley Primary School. EPC: B/C

**HALESOWEN, Hagley Road£795 pcm+Fees**  
 An unfurnished detached house within close proximity of Halesowen, briefly comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with separate w.c., driveway parking & garage, double glazing, gas central heating (new boiler). Available Now. EPC: D

**HALESOWEN, Hillbrow Crescent£750 pcm+Fees**  
 Superb 3 bedroom fully refurbished semi-detached house comprising of: porch, entrance hall, front lounge, beautiful new kitchen with large dining area, 2 double & 1 single bedrooms, house bathroom with separate shower, rear garden & driveway for 2 cars, this family home is situated in a very popular location and offers a very long term rental opportunity. Available Now. EPC: B/C

**HALESOWEN, Ashville Drive£750 pcm+Fees**  
 An unfurnished detached house in a popular area, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs w.c., 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front & rear gardens, garage & driveway parking, within easy reach of Halesowen College & town centre, available early June. EPC: B/C

**HALESOWEN, Hunnington Crescent£750 pcm+Fees**  
 Centrally located to Halesowen. This immaculate property which is not to be missed features 4 good size bedrooms, 1 large reception room, fitted kitchen with dishwasher and fridge freezer, house bathroom with shower, conservatory, block paved driveway and garage. EPC: E

**STOURBRIDGE, Trinity Road£725 pcm+Fees**  
 A beautifully fully refurbished detached house in this very popular location in a quiet cul-de-sac position comprising of: brand new kitchen leading to a very spacious lounge overlooking a full width conservatory, 3 spacious bedrooms & a fabulous appointed bathroom with shower, integral garage, driveway for 2 cars, low maintenance garden. Available now. This property offers a very long term rental opportunity. EPC: E

**KINGSWINFORD, Blenheim Road£695 pcm+Fees**  
 Located within the sought after Crestwood Park development and the catchment area for Crestwood Secondary School. A superb modern semi-detached house, featuring 3 good size bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, welcoming reception hall, large attractive lounge through to a dining area, fitted kitchen, driveway and garage, front garden and a large rear garden. EPC: D

**HALESOWEN, Hunnington Crescent£650 pcm+Fees**  
 Beautifully presented and within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This 3 bedroom townhouse features a fitted kitchen, large lounge with space for a dining area, house bathroom with shower, low maintenance rear garden, double glazing and gas central heating, driveway and garage. EPC: E

**HALESOWEN, Summerfields Avenue£650 pcm+Fees**  
 Ideally located in Hurst Green, close to popular schools, motorway access and commutable to Birmingham. This lovely semi-detached home features 2 large bedrooms and a single bedroom, 2 spacious reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, driveway parking and garage. EPC: D

**HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close£595 pcm+Fees**  
 An impressive 2nd floor apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This modern apartment features 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite shower room, spacious open plan lounge/kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocating parking. Also benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: B

**BRIERLEY HILL, Mousehall Farm Road£575 pcm+Fees**  
 A lovely 3 bedroom mid terrace house which has been recently re-decorated & newly carpeted. This property has a fitted kitchen with oven/hob, utility room, lounge with patio doors leading to a well maintained private rear garden, stairs off lounge leading to 2 double & 1 single bedroom, white bathroom suite with shower. Available Now. EPC: C

**ROWLEY REGIS, Kiln Croft £550 pcm+Fees**  
 Located in a peaceful cul-de-sac, is this modern end terrace home which is well worth an inspection, comprising of: 2 double bedrooms, lounge, fitted kitchen with white goods, house bathroom with shower, electric heating, rear garden and 1 allocated parking space. This property will not last long, so don't miss out. EPC: B/C

**HALESOWEN, Holt Road £550 pcm+Fees**  
 A nicely presented refurbished mid terraced home, close to local shops. Featuring 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, small rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: D

**HALESOWEN, Clifton Road £550 pcm+Fees**  
 A property not to be missed! Set within a quiet cul-de-sac, this immaculate and freshly decorated mid terraced property, comprising of: 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, good sized lounge, modern kitchen, house bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway parking for 3 cars, small rear garden. EPC: D

**HALESOWEN, Beaumont Road£495 pcm+Fees**  
 Ideally located in Blackheath for local amenities, train station close by and the M5. This 2 double bedroom mid terraced house features 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom, 2 bedrooms both with wardrobes, rear flat garden, on road parking , gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: D

**CRADLEY HEATH, King Street£475 pcm+Fees**  
 Located in the heart of Old Hill. Ideally situated for local shops, buses and train links is this unfurnished 1st floor modern apartment which comprises of: 2 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, fitted kitchen, lounge, double glazing, electric storage heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C

**CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close£425 pcm+Fees**  
 This lovely unfurnished ground floor apartment, with views over the canal and on a popular development. Featuring 1 bedroom, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with small fridge and washing machine, gas central heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, communal garden. EPC: C

**HALESOWEN, Richmond Court£425 pcm+Fees**  
 A unfurnished 1 bed first floor flat that has recently been decorated. Featuring kitchen with integrated appliances, living room, lovely modern shower room, electric storage heating and on road parking parking. This property is close to Huntingtree Park and a few minutes drive to Halesowen Town. EPC: B/C

**HALESOWEN, Lyde Green £395 pcm+Fees**  
 Located on the popular Homer Hill Estate in Halesowen is this unfurnished 2nd floor flat, comprising of: Living room/fitted kitchen, double bedroom, bathroom with shower, communal garden, garage, and residents parking. Available now. EPC: E

**Lye, High Street £375 pcm+Fees**  
 Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This spacious 2nd floor apartment features a lovely lounge, 1 double bedroom, bathroom, modern and contemporary kitchen/ diner, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. Available now. EPC: E

**STOURBRIDGE, Crystal Gardens £188,950**  
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EXTENDED detached home in CUL-DE-SAC location. 2 large reception rooms & kitchen. upvc CONSERVATORY to rear. 3 beds & shower room. GCH & UPVC DG. EPC RATING C.

BEARWOOD **£189,950**



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QUINTON **£165,000**



### BIRCHLEY PARK AVENUE, OLDBURY

SPACIOUS & modern, 4 bed detached home. 2 reception rooms with FITTED breakfast kitchen. Master bedroom with shower room en-suite, family bathroom, drive & GARAGE and pleasant rear garden. MUST BE VIEWED. EPC D.

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QUINTON **£159,950**



### BASONS LANE, OLDBURY

WELL PRESENTED 3 bed semi occupying a pleasant position within this popular neighbourhood, having GCH & DG. Porch, entrance hall, delightful spacious through lounge/dining area, attractive kitchen, utility, REFITTED bathroom, garage/useful store and pleasant rear garden. EPC D

BEARWOOD **£159,950**



### WARWICK ROAD, OLDBURY

Pleasant 3 bed home in CUL-DE-SAC location. Through lounge diner leading to FITTED kitchen. OFF ROAD PARKING to front. GCH & majority DG fitted. EPC E BEARWOOD OFFICE

BEARWOOD **£140,000**



### WEST STREET, ROWLEY REGIS

NO UPWARD CHAIN - modern semi-detached home with DRIVEWAY/off road parking on CORNER PLOT position. 12ft lounge & modern fitted kitchen to rear. D/S WC. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & shower room. Low maintenance rear garden. UPVC DG & GCH fitted. EPC rating: C Ref: D1618

D1618 **£125,000**



### DOROTHY ROAD, SMETHWICK

Deceptively spacious, intermediate terraced property conveniently situated, requiring internal inspection, NO UPWARD CHAIN. Spacious lounge, breakfast kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom and PLEASANT REAR GARDEN. EPC: TBC

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### BRETT YOUNG CLOSE, HALESOWEN

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### WARWICK CLOSE, OLDBURY

NO UPWARD CHAIN. A deceptively spacious, well proportioned, 2 bedroomed end terraced property occupying a pleasant position requiring some modernisation. Porch, Entrance hall, spacious through lounge/dining area, kitchen, 2 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Separate wc, and pleasant rear garden. EPC E.

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**OLDBURY | £189,950**

- Extended Semi Detached EPC Rating E
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**OLDBURY | £125,000**

- Large End Terrace EPC Rating D
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**BARTLEY GREEN | £120,000**

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- Lounge Kitchen/Diner Cloaks W/c
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**OLDBURY | £110,000**

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**OLDBURY | £104,950**

- Semi Detached Property EPC Rating E
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- Gardens To The Front and Rear

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- Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c
- Drive To The Front Garden To The Rear

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**BARTLEY GREEN | £650**

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## 6 Property

**overseas property**

**mobile homes**

## NOTICE TO READERS

Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

## FOR SALE 40FT X 20FT LOVELY PARK HOME BY THE SEA

2-bed, 2 bathrooms, fully residential. Dog friendly. 212 Schooner Park, New Quay, SA45 9SG

**BARGAIN £99,950**  
 Contact 07539 461598 to view  
 01545 561323. Email [dennis-mason1@live.co.uk](mailto:dennis-mason1@live.co.uk) for details

## MUST BE SEEN

**HOLIDAY HOME CHALET NEAR ABERYSTWYTH**

Amazing walks close to sea. Dog Friendly.  
 On site swimming pool. Entertainment and shops etc.  
 Living room, Kitchen.  
 Two bedrooms. Shower / toilet. New roof and windows.  
 Outside decking area and parking.  
 Pics on request.  
 2015 site fees paid.  
**£12,950 ono.**  
**07969 156824 / 07815 444465.**

## TWO BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME FOR SALE

Lovely position on select park, Coven Heath, two years old, as new.

**Offers around £95,000.**  
**01902 789488/07775 038895.**

## EXCEPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

In Rural Scotland, 4.5 acres with all services and full Planning permission for six bedroom house with granny annexe, workshop and stables.  
**£180,000 ono.**  
 If interested please view [www.auchedly.com](http://www.auchedly.com)

## accommodation to let

**NOTICE TO READERS** It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

**BILSTON** 3/4 bed house, DG, CH, fitted kitchen, total refur, Das welcome. Call 07870 671587.

**BRIERLEY HILL** 2-bed house, newly decorated, suit working or retired, £550pcm. 07585 429131.

**LUXURY STUDIO** apartment, Bradmore, own parking, suit pensioner / single person. 07590 911398.

**WILLENHALL:** WV12, 2-Bed mid terrace, DG, CH, off rd parking, £525 pcm. Dep/Ref's reqd. 07719 114062

## properties wanted

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**A A PROPERTIES** PAY A better cash price. Call Richard 07756 022973.

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 for the top price for your house. 0800 169 1118.

**WE ALWAYS PAY MORE**  
 for the best price now. Call Aardvark 0121 306 7786

## 5 Business & Farming

**businesses for sale**

**business directory**

**commercial premises**

## CAFE WOLVERHAMPTON

Eat in/Take out, £17,000.  
 07951 081498.

## business directory

## commercial premises

**BLACKHEATH** 2000sq Ft and 2500 Sq Ft, good security and access, from £130 + Vat 07787 831407

**INDUSTRIAL UNITS** To Let Halesowen area 500-4000 sq ft, from £1.50 per sq ft. 07710 770870

## INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO LET

Halesowen area 500-4000 sq ft, from £1.50 per sq ft. 07710 770870

## 7 Jobs

**engineering**

## CNC SETTER/OPERATOR

for small precision section. Understanding of Heidenhain programs required. Full training provided. 39 hours p/w + overtime. Pay to be discussed. Send CV to [info@omegapistons.com](mailto:info@omegapistons.com) or Omega Pistons Ltd, Oak Barn Road, B62 9DW.

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**STOKE ON TRENT** 4-5 JULY  
**TELFORD** 8-9 JULY  
**BIRMINGHAM** 3-4 AUGUST  
**DROITWICH** 8-9 AUGUST

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## part time - general

## SALES PERSON

with smart professional appearance and own transport is required for immediate start. You will be working with a small friendly team canvassing door to door for local newspapers on a self-employed, commission only basis.

OTE earnings of up to £300 plus per week. Sales experience would be ideal but not essential. For more information or to apply please contact **Heidi Brown on 07489 575096 or email [heidi.elizabeth1976@gmail.com](mailto:heidi.elizabeth1976@gmail.com)**

## business directory

## commercial premises

**BLACKHEATH** 2000sq Ft and 2500 Sq Ft, good security and access, from £130 + Vat 07787 831407

**INDUSTRIAL UNITS** To Let Halesowen area 500-4000 sq ft, from £1.50 per sq ft. 07710 770870

## 8 Motoring

**cars over £1500**

**cars under £1500**

## CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 1.0, 2010

reg, silver, 10,000 miles, one owner from new, excellent condition. £3,200. 07913 906764.

**CITROEN DISPATCH**, 07 reg, 1900 Diesel, 6 mths MoT. New tyres/ clutch. Fully alarmed, locking tyres. £1,750 ono. Dudley 07923 191378.

**FIAT 500L** 1.2 2009, 55,600 miles, full MoT, met black, fixed sunroof, ac, bluetooth & USB, alloys, immaculate. £4,750 07900 430469.

**FORD FOCUS** 1.6 Titanium, 2010, 50,000 miles, blue, FSH, excellent condition. £5,375 ono. Kingswinford 07765 912186.

## courses

**TAMWORTH** 29-30 JUNE  
**STOKE ON TRENT** 4-5 JULY  
**TELFORD** 8-9 JULY  
**BIRMINGHAM** 3-4 AUGUST  
**DROITWICH** 8-9 AUGUST

## FORD FOCUS CONVERTIBLE

Had top, many extras.  
 Top of range model, low miles.  
 Very good condition,  
**£4,350 ono.**  
**07790 480811.**

## HYUNDAI 110SE Auto 10 months

old, 1 owner, 125 miles, blue, reluctant sale, genuine callers only, £2995. Droitwich 01902 747214.

## LAND ROVER DISCOVERY TD5

1999, 153,400 miles, green, fsh, alarm, alloys, CD, 7 seats, 12 months MoT. Re-Mapped. Good condition.  
**£1,900 ono.**  
**01902 630358.**

## LANDROVER RANGEROVER 4.6

LPG, 2001, TV, full MoT, mint condition, 1,500 ono. 07913 981460. 07941 341444 after 6pm.

## PEUGEOT 107 55, red, 11tr, 10months

MoT, CD player. Excellent condition. Cheap to run £1,950 ono. 07831 232527.

## RENAULT CLIO Black, Excellent

condition 6 months MoT, clean text & insurance 76k miles. £1,900 ono. 07582648879

## RENAULT CLIO Expression, 07, 3-dr

MoT'd, only 21k, service history, excellent condition. £2,800 only. 07954 177136. 01902 681036.

## TOYOTA YARIS 5DR

2009, 42,589 Miles, Black, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, long MoT, central locking, pas, tax, Stereo, CD.  
**£3,900 ono**  
**07989423617**

## VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.7 CDTI SRI

5dr hatch, Reg NA11 PGO, 18k, excellent condition, black, 17 inch alloys, air con, front and rear park sensors, CD radio, MoT 2016, 60mpg  
**£30 road tax,**  
**£7,995 ovno.**  
**07437 329038.**

## VAUXHALL TIGRA EXCLUSIVE

1.4 convertible, 2006, black leather heated seats, MoT March 16, FSH.  
**£2,825 ono.**  
**01902 900943 or 07903 992681.**

## VW CADDY C20

1.9 tdi, 2010, new mot, fsh, 74,000 Miles, white, 1 owner from new, must be seen, no vat  
**£5,000 ono**  
**07748410900**

## ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Directory requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

## CITROEN BERLINGO diesel, 02

One owner, FSH, 80k, £750. 07494 090 052.

## CROWN MOTORS

Closing down clearance trade sale. Lots of bargains. 07985 664389. WV14 8AA.

## FORD KA, 04, red, 66k, long MoT,

alloy wheels, stereo, Great condition, cheap to run. £825 ono. 07638 074158.

## FORD FIESTA LX, 1997, 57,700

miles, blue, MoT, used daily, 1242cc, £299 ono. 01902 676480.

## FORD KA 1.3 2000 Reg, only

67,000 miles, mint condition for year, fsh, 12 months MoT, £675 o.n.o. 07954 437625.

## FORD KA 1.3 2002, 55k Miles,

black, pas, Stereo, CD. Ideal for fixing up or spares. Genuine reason for sale. £150.00 07885 821551.

## FORD KA, 2008, FSH, Full MoT,

63k, new stereo. Very good condition. £1,295. o.n.o. Telephone 07598 120638.

## HONDA CRV, 1999, 151,000 miles,

blue, 9 months MoT, £750 ono. 07629 334505.

## HYUNDAI GETZ 1.1, 04, full MoT,

blue, FSH, long MoT, mint condition. £1,250 o.n.o. 07754 557861.

## KIA CARENS 2006, MoT April 16,

two keys, two owners. Very reliable. £995 ono. 01902 686411.

## MAZDA 323 5 door hatch, red, 1.6,

1996, family owned from new, MoT, low miles. £450. 01902 752590.

## MAZDA 6 for sale, spares or repairs,

£300. Please call 07871 932428.

## MAZDA MX5

2000, silver, not perfect but nice, clean, reliable car, 7 months MoT, new tyres and stereo.  
**£850.**  
**0121 572 8688 / 07949 390236.**

## PEUGEOT 206 CONVERTIBLE 02,

blue, FSH, long MoT, mint condition. £1,250 ono. 07935 337167.

## PEUGEOT 206CC 1.6 cabriolet, 04

reg, 69k, silver, MoT, excellent condition. £1,500 ono. 07913 981460.

## PEUGEOT 206CC 5 door, 73,000

Miles, blue, air con, MoT, alloy, central locking, Alloys, CD, Cat C repaired. Quick sale. £850 ono. 0778261686

## PEUGEOT 307 HDI

1400, 2003, 5dr hatch, silver, 77k, 12 months MoT, very good condition throughout,  
**£1,250**  
**07899 497967.**

## RENAULT CLIO P reg, full MoT,

49k, 1.2 i, 3dr, red, CD, very economical. £385. 07804 168157.

## RENAULT LAGUNA 1.8, 2003, 64k,

very good condition, 9 months MoT, first to see will buy, £800 ono. 01902 61507 or 07535 696469.

## RENAULT MEGANE 94,000 miles,

alloy, long MoT, Diesel, sunroof, Alloys, CD. Ring for more details. £1,150. o.n.o. 07825 873434.

## SKODA FELICIA Diesel, T Reg, 5Dr,

10 months MoT, bargain at £450, sale due to illness. 01384 211572.

## TOYOTA RAV4 2.0 1995, red, 7

months MoT, new cat and front discs and pads, good tyres £495. 01902 682269.

## TOYOTA YARIS 1.0 Black, 51 reg,

3dr hatchback, nine months MoT, 80k, good condition, immaculate inside. £800. 07954 407612

## VAUXHALL AGILA X reg, 136k,

good condition and reliable, MoT December. £450 ono. 01902 791413.

## VAUXHALL AGILA X reg, 138k,

used daily, good condition, reliable, MoT December. £350 ono. 01902 791413.

## VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2, new

shape, 07 reg, MoT, 110k, good runner, needs slight cosmetic hence £1,375. 07707 276545.

## VAUXHALL CORSA 1999, 66k,

MoT Dec 2015. Good clean condition. Reliable. Lady owner. £475. 01384 256482.

## VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.8 16v LS, X

reg, 85,000 miles, green, MoT April 2016, good runner, good condition. £350 ono. 07891 515511 after 3pm.

## VAUXHALL VECTRA 2.0cc, diesel,

2002, silver, 4 months MoT, alloys, good condition. £450. 07842 732647.

## VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8 CLUB

2004, petrol, 1 gas, black, electric windows, air con, long MoT, central locking, radio/CD. £1,460 ono. 01384 401209.

## classic cars

**CLASSIC CARS WANTED**  
 Private cash buyer!  
 Instant cash settlement.  
 Any age, any condition.  
 Call Market Drayton.  
 01630 652993.

## MG MIDGET 1978, Red, MoT

October 2015, som, dry use only. Condition 3. £3,000 ono. 01384 258040.

## SUZUKI BERLINO 1.6 GLX 1998,

4dr Saloon, Full MoT, Green, 25,000 miles from new. Must be seen. £350. 01922 646437/07732084639

## commercial vehicles

## PEUGEOT PARTNER PROFESSIONAL

**WHITE VAN, 1.6 DIESEL,**  
 Brand new in June 2013, three seater all manoeuvrable to allow more goods to be carried, five door, sliding door on passenger side, fitted blue tooth/CD and radio, interior ply lined, three year plan, second service taken place end of May, never used as a work horse only a second hand private vehicle. cost £13,750, bargain  
 b)£8,000  
 private sale no VAT.  
 Excellent condition, see it and you will buy it.  
 Mr Richards 01902 341861

## driving tuition

## Homer's

Mini, Clio, Corsa, Fiesta, Punto, 207, KA, Fiat 500, Yaris.  
**10 Hours £89! Five Hours £50!**  
**2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered**  
**MALE & FEMALE INSTRUCTORS**  
**MANUAL & AUTOMATIC**  
 AD/PDI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available.  
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**01562 870050 / 01384 234954**  
**01543 660120 / 0121 564 0090**  
**01902 580065**  
[www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk](http://www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk)

## motorbikes

## HONDA 650cc NTV Excellent condition,

17,595 miles only, £1,500 ono. 01902 341487.

## QUADRIHLA Quadbike, 250 twin

singer, 06, road legal, £800 ono. 07460 313581.

## scrap vehicles

## OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded

that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

## A B SPARES

**Pays More**  
 All Scrap Cars & Vans Wanted  
 Anything Considered  
**Free Collection**  
 Scrap It Legally QCD. Given Instant Payment.  
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**01902 659775 evenings**

## MCB

**TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS**  
**Tel: 01902 408176**  
**1000's of parts available at all times**  
**MONMOR RD, WV1 2TZ**

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**VANS! CAMPER! MOT FAILURES!**  
**ANYTHING CONSIDERED. FREE COLLECTION**  
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**01902 562853**  
**07895 346811 - 24 hrs**

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**01902 489 500**

**YellowSpringbok.co.uk**



**ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT**  
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available  
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611 Oldbury Area.

## vehicles wanted

## alan reed cars

Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.  
**01562 711083 / 07831 245313**

## spares & accessories

## accessories & services

REGISTRATION NUMBER P22BAS for sale on retention. £795. Telephone 01902 336058.

TRAILER Approx 5x4 with cover, must be seen £250 ono. 01902 495097.

## mobile mechanics

MOBILE MECHANICS Service & repairs. Headgasket, clutches and cambelts. 07747 848469.

## SELLING YOUR CAR?

We have a package to suit every budget. Packages start from as little as

**£19.50 for 6 nights** Plus 6 nights free if you do not sell.

## CALL

**01902 317878**

## 9 Local Information

**LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES**  
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

## 10 Personals

### general

**LOOKING FOR MY SON**  
Mr A Lewis, last seen in Wolverhampton. Please get in touch. Box Number P19862, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.



**TIPTON TOWN FC**  
Are looking for players in all positions for their Midland floodlit youth league team. We are in Northern Premier Division and also in the FA Youth Cup. Players aged from 16 to 18 of September 1.

Also under 21's looking for players in all position. Call or text Ian on 07759 551092 with your football CV to arrange a trial.

### personal



**HELLO MY NAME IS JIM I'M 68**

Retired, fit and active, of slim build.

I enjoy swimming, travel, holidays home and abroad, eating out, I am a divorced non smoker. I WLTM slim female 65+ who enjoys similar activities.

Box Number P19867, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

### LOOKING FOR JOHN

We met in the Hollybush Garden Centre just before Christmas with my Daughter.

Have been trying to find you.

Please reply Box Number P19860, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

### PROFESSIONAL FEMALE 54

Looking for an Educated male to a Degree Level who is attractive, genuine and caring, enjoys quiet nights in, outdoor life and holidays abroad.

Early 50's to early 60's, who is caring, honest and respectable. For Friendship or more.

Genuine replies only, previous responders need not write again thank you.

Box Number P19866, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

**HAVE YOU CHECKED** your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.



### SINGLE SLIM MALE

Young looking, 66, would love to meet genuine, honest, reliable lady 60 - 70 for outings and to spend quality time together and hopefully leading to romance.

Box Number P19863, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

### sports clubs



### CRESSWELL WANDERERS COMMUNITY CHARTER STANDARD CLUB

Fancy a change of Club? Players wanted to strengthen good Friendly family run teams 2015/16 season.

Under 8's contact Pardeep 07967 383814. Under 11's contact Ruth 07583 787266. Under 14's contact Steve 07837 489839. Under 15's contact Lee 07768 869703. Academy 5's and under contact Ron 07717 677627.



### STOURBRIDGE GLASSBOYS FC

Under 12's 2015/16. Invite quality players to join division 1 team. FA Charter standard friendly club, level 2 qualified coach. New adidas kit supplied. Home games on a private pitch. Contact Neil Clapp 07903 467233. Email: neilclapp@sky.com

## LONDON THEATRE BREAKS



**Choose your show, price band\*and how you want to travel**

### Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Selected weekend departures

**Saturday Night from £139.<sup>95</sup>** **Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £149.<sup>95</sup>**

Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. For the Saturday Night option see the evening performance. For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket and an overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel with full English breakfast.

Pick ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

### Rail inclusive breaks – Two or three days

Departures most weekends

**Saturday Night Theatre from £159.<sup>95</sup>**

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance. Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

**Theatre Showstopper from £229.<sup>95</sup>**

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening. Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade plus two nights stay at a three or four-star London hotel of your choice (hotel supplements may apply). Includes a top price ticket for a Friday evening performance.

\*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies.

Organised by Omega Events Ltd (ABTA Y590X)



For a theatre brochure please call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm),

or go to [expressandstar.com/starextratravel](http://expressandstar.com/starextratravel)

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

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6 NIGHTS IN PRINT  
1 WEEK ONLINE

AN INSERT INTO YOUR LOCAL CHRONICLES

**PLUS 6 NIGHTS FREE IF YOU DO NOT SELL!**



**BMW 325Ci CONVERTIBLE**

2002, 72,000 miles, metallic silver, black hood, taxed, full MoT, full service history, leather heated seats, aircon, excellent condition, nice eye catcher.

£2,995 ono.  
01902 123456.

**£29.50 PACKAGE INCLUDES**

6 NIGHTS IN PRINT. 1 WEEK ONLINE  
AN INSERT INTO YOUR LOCAL CHRONICLES  
**PLUS 6 NIGHTS FREE IF YOU DO NOT SELL!**

**SKODA FABIA 1.4 CLASSIC**  
5dr hatchback, 2003, metallic blue, 45,000 miles, FSH, 12 months MoT, 6 months tax, excellent inside and out.  
£1,595 ono.  
01902 123456.

**£19.50 PACKAGE INCLUDES**

**PLUS 6 NIGHTS FREE IF YOU DO NOT SELL!**

**RENAULT CLIO 1.2 CAMPUS**  
Sport, 06 plate, BRG, 55K, four months tax, 11 months MoT, CD, EW, FSH, £3,450. 01902 123456.

BOOK ON LINE - [www.expressandstar.com/bookanad](http://www.expressandstar.com/bookanad)  
IN PERSON - At your local Express & Star office  
EMAIL: [marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk)

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Tel: 01902 317878

# Classified Ads



# Tivoli is strong on style

By Sharon Walters

**The contemporary SsangYong Tivoli B-segment SUV arrives in the UK this summer with prices starting from just £12,950.**

"This is a car that will really put SsangYong on the map and change brand perceptions," says Paul Williams, CEO of SsangYong Motor UK.

"By any criteria but especially style, interior finish and value for money, Tivoli stands close scrutiny.

"The verdict from those who have already seen and driven the car is that we're on to a winner.



"But ultimately it's the customer who wins: this is a modern, safe, well-built and comprehensively equipped car, and with a price and warranty no one else can match. Anyone considering a small SUV will have to put it on their list."

The Tivoli is extremely well equipped – see specification mentioned, and for simplicity the range comprises three main model options – SE, EX and ELX, while for those who want further individualisation, the My Tivoli programme offers a wide number of further choices.

## Bluetooth

The Tivoli SE starts from just £12,950, and is available with a choice of a 1.6-litre Euro six petrol or diesel engine (from August) with manual transmission.

The vehicle is finished in a smart grey cloth trim and includes 16in alloy wheels, cruise control, a stop/go system (petrol), Smart steering (normal, comfort and sport modes), an RDS/Bluetooth radio and seven airbags.

The EX adds the option of automatic transmission on the petrol powered car, (diesel automatic and diesel 4x4 manual are available through the My Tivoli personalisation programme), grey or beige leather upholstery, 18in alloy Spiral wheels, dual-zone climate control, seven-inch touch-screen smart audio system with rear view camera, heated front seats, front fog lights and a luggage load cover.

The top-of-the-range ELX is available with the full choice of petrol, diesel, manual and automatic transmission, front wheel drive or 4x4.

It features diamond-cut alloy wheels, a smart instrument cluster, smart keyless



**'By any criteria but especially style, interior finish and value for money, Tivoli stands close scrutiny'**

starting, front and rear parking sensors, privacy glass, rear spoiler, automatic headlamps, rain sensing wipers, full TomTom navigation system with seven-inch touch screen, rear view camera, and the option of the Styling pack and Red Leather pack via the My Tivoli personalisation programme.

There is a choice of six colours – Flaming red, Grand white and metallic Dandy blue, Space black, Silent silver and Techno grey and two additional colours – Jazz

brown and Icecap blue through My Tivoli.

You can also reate your own style with My Tivoli.

The My Tivoli personalisation programme allows customers to create their own distinctive car.

This includes the Styling pack which gives a choice of five two-tone colour roof combinations, the Red Leather pack, two further colours – metallic Jazz brown and Icecap blue, as well as further engine and drivetrain options.



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**Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km). Astra Excite 1.4, 5dr: Urban: 38.2 (7.4), Extra-urban: 57.7 (4.9), Combined: 48.7 (5.8). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 136g/km.#**

Participating Retailers only. Model featured Astra Excite 1.4i 5dr in Power Red from £17,920 on the road. Offer price £12,595. Offer available on orders or registrations from 8 April to 1 July 2015, subject to availability. Offer available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only, excluding B2B). All other sales categories are excluded; cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. UK-supplied vehicles only. #Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Correct at time of going to press.



# Corsa is back with the latest must-have

By James Parker

**There's a lot to be said for a wait-and-see policy. It usually allows the innovators to invest all the money and succumb to the pitfalls, before swooping in with a product that hits all the right notes.**

Vauxhall have proven pretty adept at this. A vast company like General Motors is usually too mired in bureaucracy to be first to market consistently. Therefore the next best policy is to work in a more measured fashion and bring to market vehicles that just won't fail to chime with the buying public.

The Vauxhall Zafira is a case in point. Compact MPVs weren't new news when the Zafira first appeared in 1999, but it quickly established market dominance. Likewise, the Ford Fiesta had been on the market for fully six years before GM responded with the Nova/Corsa. These days that game is still being repeated. Ford introduced its 1.0-litre three-cylinder Ecoboost petrol engine back in 2012. Now Vauxhall has its own three-cylinder 1.0-litre ECOTEC. But has launching late this time come at a price?

There's little doubt that this 1.0-litre, 3-cylinder turbo petrol unit is the big drawcard of the latest Corsa's engine line-up.

Recognising that diesel powerplants don't always make the big sales numbers in the supermini sector, Vauxhall has instead devoted its attention to super-efficient petrol units. The 1.0-litre is the only production three-cylinder engine on the market with a balancer shaft, helping it combat noise, vibration and harshness. This Euro6-compliant engine is offered on either 90 or 115PS power outputs and both manage 170Nm of torque at just 1,800rpm.

Straight away you'll spot similarities to the front end of the ADAM model and that's no coincidence, this looking set to become the Vauxhall family face for the foreseeable future. That means a rounded, friendly look with a broader front grille than Corsas of old.

Drop inside and you'll see even bigger improvements. A driver control centre takes pride of place within the instrument panel, which is themed around horizontal lines. The fourth-generation Corsa is also the first high-volume Vauxhall to be available with IntelliLink, the communications system which has already been seen in the ADAM.

## Premium

As you would expect, there's a slight premium to pay for this more modern 1.0-litre engine but it's not too great, with figures starting from around the £11,000 mark. You'll get much of the premium back anyway with the ECOTEC unit's lower running costs.

This latest generation Corsa ECOTEC is anything but built down to a price and equipment available for these cars includes heated front seats, steering wheel and windscreen, as well as soft-tone ambient lighting and a full-size panoramic roof is also available. Safety systems include Side Blindspot Alert, High Beam Assist, Lane Departure Warning, bi-xenon lights and a rear-view camera.

If there's one thing that has consistently soured the public's relationship with the latest small-capacity petrol engines it's the gulf between the published fuel economy figures and what owners get in real world scenarios. Perhaps Vauxhall has played a bit of a blinder here in downplaying the 1.0-litre engine's economy a bit, claiming a more credible 54.7mpg on the combined cycle.

After all, Vauxhall knows a thing or two about this market. The Corsa has been the company's best-selling car for many years, generally sitting at number two in the overall passenger car sales charts. In its last full year, Vauxhall sold 83,000 Corsas in the UK, outstripping total full-range sales of manufacturers like SEAT, Skoda, Renault and Citroen. We're the lead market for the Corsa by a massive margin, the second biggest being Germany with 50,000 registrations. This latest ECOTEC model is going to contribute a big part of that bottom line.

Facing down Ford's all-conquering Fiesta is a devilishly tough assignment but Vauxhall seem confident that the latest Corsa has what it takes. The 1.0-litre ECOTEC engine will be a big part of their product offensive and by launching a couple of years after Ford's 1.0-litre, Vauxhall will hopefully avoid many of the problems that have beset their rival over claimed versus actual fuel economy. The very fact that Vauxhall claim 54.7mpg for the 90PS Corsa where Ford reckons on 65.7mpg for their more powerful 100PS unit would suggest that Vauxhall has set this engine up for everyday driveability rather than merely spoofing the NEDC economy test.

Although this latest Corsa at first looks like a mere restyle, it's much more than that. Here's a car that's been designed from a clean sheet of paper, with an enormous development budget behind it. The 1.0-litre engine could just be the secret weapon that will unhinge the Fiesta.

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## DRIVETIME



## Writers attempting world record in Audi A6 Ultra

**A pair of motor journalists will attempt to set a world record for the number of countries visited on one tank of fuel.**

The 'carefully planned route' will start in the Netherlands, pass through Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Lichtenstein, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Italy before heading towards the Balkans.

At the wheel of the Audi A6 TDI Ultra making the attempt will be respected freelance journalist Andrew Frankel and part-time racing driver Rebecca Jackson, who also co-presented I Want

That Car on ITV4. Using the hashtag #RecordRoadTrip, the duo will try to make the most of the A6 Ultra's 73-litre fuel tank and theoretical ability to record 67.9mpg on average.

With careful cruising at modest speeds they should be able to average economy in the 70s or more.

The RAC is backing the project, which will start on the Continent as sea or channel crossings are not allowed under the official world record rules.

RAC #RecordRoadTrip co-ordinator Simon Williams said: "We're confident the combination of two skilled drivers, a highly fuel-efficient Audi A6 Ultra and

a route that takes in the most possible countries in the least fuel-taxing way will lead to a hard-to-beat record that covers at least 10 countries, hopefully more."

Jon Zammatt, head of Audi UK public relations, said: "With the RAC we are planning a serious record-setting run with all the detailed planning you would expect from a German car maker."

"At a time when MPG is a top priority, we are using an A6 Ultra to set a new world record, using real world parameters. It's truly astounding how efficient our executive car can be in normal use."

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# Foster gets on his bike to get back to fitness

SIDELINED Albion keeper Ben Foster is training with Olympian Jonny Brownlee to recover from a serious knee injury.

The England star joined the Olympic triathlon bronze medalist on Monday to continue his rehab from a damaged cruciate knee ligament.

He is also cycling from London to Paris next week and has used his time with Brownlee, who won bronze at London 2012 behind gold medalist brother Alistair, to prepare for the Cure Leukaemia charity ride.

Foster has been out since March when he suffered his third cruciate knee ligament injury but believes the help from Brownlee has been invaluable.

"I was up in Leeds on Monday with Jonny, we did a 60k ride and it was a really good opportunity to learn a few things," he said.

"I think he took it easy on me. The average pace was about 26 or 27 kilometres an hour which isn't too bad but some of the hills were hard.

"He found things super easy but it was nice to get out and learn a few tips, stuff you wouldn't know like energy saving and how to ride in a group.

"One of the physios here used to work for Team GB and knows him from there so he pulled a few strings.

"The club have said once I've finished the ride I need to start lowering the amount I'm doing.

"I really do have to focus on gym-based work to strengthen but for now it's perfect for my rehab because there isn't any impact on my knees."

# Ex-Wolves star Ndah is now bankrupt

FORMER Wolves star George Ndah has been declared bankrupt.

The 40-year-old cost Wolves £1million and was on their books for seven injury-hit years until retiring in 2006.

He became a football consultant based in Surrey but filed for bankruptcy last December, with the order now finalised.

Ndah became a fan favourite during his time at Molineux despite injuries restricting him to 96 appearances.

His Wolves career was largely defined by two big Black Country derbies against Albion scoring two goals against the Baggies at Molineux in 2001, just 18 months after breaking his leg at The Hawthorns.

Ndahalso famously scored the winner against Newcastle United in a memorable 2003 FA Cup tie.

# I can play at higher level – Vlaar

RON Vlaar has hinted he may leave Villa this summer after insisting he can play at a higher level.

The Dutch international has been offered a new deal at Villa Park, with his current contract set to expire at the end of the month.

Boss Tim Sherwood has made no secret of his desire to keep the 30-year-old but Vlaar appears likely to explore other options before making up his mind. "I have it in consideration," said Vlaar of Villa's new offer. "I'll think about it.

"I want to maximise my career and think I can go a step higher."

Vlaar's future has been the subject of speculation for months and for a long time he looked certain to

depart Villa Park. But Sherwood's arrival and the club's upturn in form, which saw them achieve Premier League survival and reach the FA Cup final, prompted him to re-evaluate and the defender admitted in April he would consider staying.

Much is likely to depend on what other offers the defender, who was linked with a move to Manchester United after impressing in last summer's World Cup, now receives.

Vlaar has often struggled with injury since joining Villa from Feyenoord for £3.2million in 2012 and yesterday was forced to pull out of the Dutch squad ahead of their Euro 2016 qualifier with Latvia because of a recurring knee problem. Whether Vlaar

stays or goes is just one of several questions hanging over Villa as they enter the close season.

Christian Benteke's future is also in doubt, while one man looking likely to head out of the door is fellow forward Andreas Weimann.

The 23-year-old, who has not started a game since Villa's 3-1 defeat at Manchester United in early April, is being pursued by Derby County.

Sherwood does look set to tie down a possible star of the future with highly-rated youngster Kevin Toner expected to sign a new deal. The 18-year-old is poised to sign a one-year deal with the option for another.

# Stearman kept the skipper spot warm

IT was an honour to captain the team as a local lad – but Wolves' defender Richard Stearman insists he was just keeping the armband warm for Danny Batth.

Stearman stepped in for the final two games of the season as Wolves agonisingly missed out on a play-off place.

He took the captain's armband from injured Batth, who suffered a stress fracture of his left foot before the final two games against Wigan and Millwall.

Stearman has endured a roller-coaster few years at Molineux,

Despite his age Stearman has become one of the veterans of the Wolves dressing room and he told his team mates what a Wolverhampton man being Wolves captain meant.

And he admitted he relished the responsibility of leading out the team.

Stearman said: "It's something I thoroughly enjoy and I was very honoured to lead the boys out.

"I must stress I was only keeping it warm for Danny but it's a job I thrive upon."

"I said that to them – for someone who's from Wolverhampton as well, it's a big honour for myself and they repaid me with two good performances and two wins at the end of the season.

"So I'm undefeated as captain but I'm keeping it warm for Danny for when he comes back fit and it was a great couple of weeks and an incredible couple of seasons."

Stearman has been linked with a move away from Molineux, with Fulham said to be lining up a surprise bid.

He has 12 months left on his current deal .

# Wait and see what Villa can do, says Scott

WINGER Scott Sinclair believes Villa fans will see the true extent of their transformation under boss Tim Sherwood next season.

The former Tottenham manager has already gone on record to say he wants to rid the club of its "losing mentality" with Villa having battled relegation for the last four seasons.

Sherwood believes working with the players in the non-pressurised environment of pre-season will allow him to truly put his stamp on the club. And Sinclair can't wait to get started.

"When the gaffer came in, he put his stamp on things but at the same time he had to ensure we were winning matches to keep us in the Premier League," he said.

"Usually you have pre-season to get your ideas across but now he can work with us to prepare for the new

# Young riders put mettle to the pedal

**HALESOWEN Cycling Club Juniors had an opportunity at the weekend to show their elder team mates how they could ride.**

The youngsters took took the opportunity with style. Saturday saw the fourth round of the National Series in Hillingdon, Middlesex.

First up in the U-12s section was Luke Harris a regular finisher in the top 10 nationally and he was there again.

In the U-14s Jamieson Blain, ex-schoolboy champion, and fresh from his fourth place in the previous round put on a fine show attacking the field in trademark style.

He was caught by the peloton but still placed top 20 in the final sprint gaining more series points.

Last up for Halesowen was Oliver Dighton, younger brother of road racer Sam Dighton, in the U-16 brace.

Oliver attacked off the front early into the race but the 80-strong field were in no mood to let him get away and after the best part of a lap out on his own he was hauled back in.

## Hanging

He was undeterred however, and stayed at the front of the race throughout coming off the final bend in second place and hanging on in the bunch sprint for a top 20 position and the opening of his account in the series points standing.

West Midlands rider Jake Stewart posted a fine third place in the race with a trademark sprint.

On the Sunday it was the sixth round of the Midland Regional championships at Sundorne circuit, Shrewsbury and a large Halesowen contingent quickly made their presence felt with Ella Harris taking third overall in the U-8 girls.

Next up was her older brother Luke, lying in second place in the series who went one better this time round to grab a fine first place.

The U-14 race was well represented with five Halesowen riders.

Jamieson split the pack with only Lewis Askey from Lichfield able to stay with him.

After a crash Jamiesoncaught most of the bunch finishing in 4th and protecting his series standing of 2nd place.

## Welborn battles to keep title



Jason Welborn getting stuck in with Ryan Aston at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall

A KEENLY-contested points decision saw Jason Welborn retain the Midlands light middleweight title after a cracking Saturday night main event at Wolverhampton Civic Hall, writes Craig Birch.

Huge debate followed the call from referee Terry O'Connor that left the puncher from Rowley Regis two points up at the final bell, despite visiting the canvas.

He was in real trouble come the

fifth round as he sunk to the mat, Dudley's Ryan Aston switch hitting to land a damaging right hook to the sternum.

Welborn left answering the count until very late but gamely battled on and saw the round out, despite slipping over in an ensuing exchange.

Aston's aloof southpaw stance bamboozled Welborn at the start, working the jab well and loading

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## Toffees are keeping an eye on Dicko

WOLVES striker Nouha Dicko is a transfer target for Everton with the Toffees lining up a summer bid.

Dicko has 12 months left on his deal and is vulnerable to bids in the transfer window. He has enjoyed two excellent seasons at Wolves, scoring 27 goals in 56 league appearances.

But despite his contract running out, it will take a big bid for Wolves to consider parting with Dicko, who scored 15 goals last season and cost just £300,000 when he signed in January 2014.

He linked up prolifically with Benik Afobe and Bakary Sako.

Of the trio, Wolves are resigned to losing Sako but will be desperate to keep Afobe and Dicko as they mount a promotion charge.

They hope to restrict their first-team losses to just Sako, who has been linked with a host of Premier League clubs and is out of contract at the end of the month.

However, Wolves will want to sort out Dicko's contract to end any speculation this summer, and also to avoid him leaving on a free transfer next year.

Everton boss Roberto Martinez worked with Dicko at Wigan and is keen to bolster his strikeforce this summer after bagging just 48 league goals last season, with former Albion star Romelu Lukaku scoring 10.

But Lukaku has been linked with a move away from Goodison Park, leaving just one-goal Arouna Kone as a recognised striker.

Meanwhile, transfer target Michal Zyro has refused to rule out leaving Legia Warsaw this summer.

Jackett is believed to have watched 22-year-old winger Zyro in action and is running the rule over him as a potential replacement for Sako but Celtic are also interested.

## Totney takes top role at Tipton after Pugh resigns

TIPTON TOWN have carried out a shuffle after the resignation of first team manager Nicky Pugh.

Pugh told the club committee that he wished to step down for personal reasons, and his resignation was reluctantly accepted.

Town, who finished second-bottom of the Midland Football League Premier last season, have already appointed their first team coach Paul Totney as his successor.

Totney tweeted: "Proud to announce I'm the new 1st team manager at Tipton Town."

Tipton said in a statement: "The club would like to thank Nicky Pugh for all of his hard work and effort last season, in rebuilding the team under very difficult circumstances."

"After discussions over the weekend, first team coach Paul Totney has been offered and accepted the position of first team manager."

"Paul, who had already joined the club as part of a reformed management set-up, has a wealth of experience in management."

## £2m deal for Baggies as sponsor moves

ALBION hope to announce a club-record £2m sponsorship deal in the next week after main sponsors Intuit Quickbooks swapped the Baggies for Villa.

Hawthorns sources say the club are closing in on a new partner after their relationship with Intuit ended after just one season.

On a bizarre day yesterday, Villa announced a two-year deal with the US-based computer firm just minutes after Albion had confirmed their parting of the ways.

Intuit's deal with Villa is thought to be worth in excess of £2m-per-year – an increase on their £1.5m contract with Albion.

### Football

But Hawthorns insiders say they are confident of smashing the £2m barrier for the first time in their history when their new deal is completed.

Albion's Intuit deal, which was signed last summer, included a review clause for both parties that could have led to a one-year extension. But the Hawthorns hierarchy insist they opted against extending the agreement.

Adrian Wright, Albion's sales and marketing director, said: "We have enjoyed our partnership and I think both parties believe it to have been

a mutually-advantageous venture. Intuit QuickBooks embraced the club warmly and we shall always be grateful for their willing participation in the Astle Day shirt change."

Charlie Wijeratna, Villa chief commercial officer, said: "We will be proud to have on our shirt next season a major US brand that has ambition to grow in Europe and Asia."

"I know the team here at Villa will be working hard to combine the marketing capability of QuickBooks with the Aston Villa brand and the reach of the Premier League. We hope and expect it to be the start of a great partnership that will enhance both brands significantly."

# GOOD BATTING NOT ENOUGH

RICHARD Evans says Tarryck Gabriel's batting was a crumb of comfort for Halesowen's weekend defeat at Shifnal.

Gabriel enjoyed his best innings of the season with 55 when chasing down what seemed to be a modest Shifnal total – but the home side ran out winners by 22 runs.

And Evans said: "I asked for a response after we were soundly beaten at Eastnor a fortnight ago and we followed that up with a victory against Brewood and a winning draw from Stourbridge both on our own turf."

A suspect looking wicket made it look like a good toss to win and after reducing Shifnal to 17-2 the decision by Halesowen captain Faisal Shahid to bowl first was certainly vindicated.

However, Shahid dropped Shifnal's overseas star Muhamed Ayub early in his innings and Ayub and opener Collins then put together a partnership of 69 for the third wicket before Collins (33) was out leg before to the bowling of Zain Shahid.

### Dismissed

One wicket quickly became three and from 86-2 Shifnal were reduced to five down without adding to the score with Tarryck Gabriel taking two wickets in as many balls.

Ayub was dismissed for 38 and Chadwick sent back without troubling the scorers. Only Sam Cotter (37 no) represented any sort of resistance to the Halesowen attack with Gabriel the pick of the bowlers finishing with impressive figures of 4-51 from his maximum 17 overs. Rich Brooker provided excellent back up to Gabriel at the other end and his 3-16 restricted Shifnal to 144 all out.

Halesowen's Hassan Qaumi and Juhar Johal puton 25 for the first wicket before Qaumi (11) fell to Edwards.

In-form batter Ben Stebbings (14) was the next wicket to fall when he was caught behind.

Only Gabriel, who batted with great maturity for his 55, provided any sort of resistance to the Shifnal bowling as wickets continued to fall to a series of rash shots. Iain Mills returned figures of 5-24 for Shifnal with Gabriel last out for Halesowen having reached just 122.

## Whiley loses out at French Open



Halesowen's Jordanne Whiley, left, and doubles partner Yui Kamiji

GREAT Britain's Gordon Reid clinched the first Grand Slam title of his career on Friday after partnering Japan's Shingo Kunieda to a straight sets victory in the men's doubles final at the Roland Garros wheelchair tennis event in Paris.

Meanwhile, there were runners-up honours for another Anglo-Japanese partnership after Jordanne Whiley and Yui Kamiji saw their incredible sequence of five Grand Slam women's doubles titles brought to an end by Dutch second seeds Jiske Griffioen and Aniek van Koot.

Second seeds Reid and Kunieda beat Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina and Nicolas Peifer of France 6-1, 7-6(1) to extend their unbeaten se-

quence as a doubles partnership after winning their first tournament together at last month's Japan Open.

"I'm delighted to win my first Grand Slam title, it's amazing," said Reid, who was contesting his fifth Grand Slam doubles final and his second since 2013 in Paris. "I've really enjoyed playing with Shingo here. It was a very good match today. The tie-break was tough, but I relaxed into it and hit some really good winners."

"It's been a tough couple of weeks last week and then coming straight here, but it's all been worth it and these are the kind of results that help to pay back the support."

## Quiet week but runs are still found

IT was a quiet week locally for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club.

However, there were still races to be found if you were prepared to look, even if you had to get the telescope out to find them.

A small group of runners travelled south to Herefordshire for the Magic Roundabout 10k.

A race over an undulating course with 90 per cent of the route on spring grass close cropped by grazing sheep, almost like running on a carpet but with some nasty climbs making it a challenging route.

The bonus on reaching the summits of these climbs being that runners are rewarded with fantastic views over the Welsh borders while they get their breath back.

### Quicker

Mark Gallimore was first back in 16th place in 44.49 taking third in his age group, Helen Tromans was 38th in 47.58, a time some three minutes quicker than last year and good enough to take first in her age group.

Sarah Cox was 166th in 1.02.57 with Debbie Richards finishing in 181st just ahead of her husband, Paul Richards, with them recording the same time of 1.05.15.

Russell Fox headed home to the East Midlands for the Ramathon, or the Derby Half Marathon, the 13.1 mile race starting and finishing in the shadow of Derby County's iPro Stadium.

Fox was first back for the club finishing in 1.49.42 in 863rd place ahead of Andy Weaver who clocked 2.06.38 to take 1758th place in a field of nearly three thousand runners.

## Yeltz pull off coup with Charles signing

HALESOWEN TOWN have boosted their defensive ranks by snapping up the former Aldershot defender Anthony Charles.

The 34-year-old has vast Football League experience, having played more than 180 games for the Shots between 2007 and 2011.

A left-sided defender, Charles has also enjoyed spells playing with Northampton Town, Plymouth Argyle and Luton Town. The capture is a major coup for the Yeltz as they look to push on and improve on last season's 11th place ranking in the Evo-Stik League Northern Premier.

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